CLASSIC TALES BY
FAMOUS AUTHORS

COMPLETE IN

TWENTY VOLUMES

VOLUME XV

CLASSIC TALES

BY

FAMOUS AUTHORS

EDITED AND ARRANGED BY
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WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY
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Story Tellers Edition

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CRITICAL SYNOPSIS OF SELECTIONS

CRITICAL SYNOPSIS OF SELECTIONS

DEVIL AND TOM WALKER, THE: BY WASHINGTON IRVING.

Worthless Tom Walker, searching for Captain Kidd's buried treasure, meets the devil in the guise of a big, hairy, swarthy man, who promises Tom riches in exchange for his immortal soul, and suggests the vocation of a slaver as the quickest way. But Tom desires to be respectable as well as rich, and compromises by becoming an usurer, the devil supplying the capital. He prospers, grows avaricious and hard-hearted, and finally is whisked off by his master.

FOUR-FIFTEEN EXPRESS, THE: BY AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

This is a melodramatic ghost story of the kind to which the author was partial—a hidden crime, a phantasmal re-embodiment of the dead, his reappearance among the living as one of them, and finally a revelation by supernatural means.

LIFE MAGNET, THE: BY ALVEY A. ADEE.

The motive of this story is similar to that of "The Metempsychosis," the temporary exchange of corporeal identity by two living men. In "The Life Magnet" the motive is developed with great ingenuity. Herr Lebensfunke, the physical scientist, has discovered not only the principle of life, but also how to isolate it by means of the Life Magnet, to retain it in a separate state for some time, and finally, by returning it to the frame whence it was taken, to recreate therein the life which had departed. A fearful curiosity impels Ronald Wylde to test the Life Magnet. His identity becomes for a time merged in that of a besotted

tramp. He effects a re-exchange by the barest chance; but his consciousness for the rest of his life is of a strangely compounded dual identity.

METEMPSYCHOSIS, THE: By Dr. Robert Macnish.

The Pythagorean philosophy taught the doctrine of the transmigration of the human soul after death to a new body—that of some lower animal. This is the tale of an interchange of bodies and identity by two men still living; how the soul of a staid professor left his own proper body and took up its abode in that of a dissolute student of bad repute; how the sensitive soul of the professor suffered from its enforced companionship with a brutal body, and how he finally escaped.

TIME MACHINE, THE: By H. G. Wells.

A scientist demonstrates that space has four dimensions instead of but three—the fourth being duration, or time. He devises a machine which traverses the fourth dimension, as other machines operate in the fields of the three mathematical dimensions. His time-machine carries him physically into the vast abyss of unborn time, millions of years hence. The world has become a vast waste. The human race has passed away, or rather has differentiated into two races—one of fair and feeble animals, loving, docile and witless, the outgrowth of the emotions; and the other hideous, dwarfish, industrious—and cannibal! The explorer comes back from his million-year journey with physical proof that his tale is true. Again he ventures into the unknown, and returns no more.

WHAT WAS IT?: By Fitz-James O'Brien.

This is a tale of the preternatural; not a ghost story, but of a hideous invisible creature—fierce, malicious, of deadly strength, carnivorous, present to the sense of touch, but not to the sense of sight. The story tells of its nocturnal depredations, its fierce attack in the darkness upon its attempted victim, the awful struggle for life, the final capture of the horrible assailant, and the wonder of its identity. EDITOR.

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AUTHORS

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ADEE, ALVEY A.: The literary productions of this author comprise a few desultory contributions to magazines, which have not been collected. His strong story, called "The Life Magnet," appeared in "Putnam's Magazine," 1870. Mr. Adee has been for many years one of the permanent officials of the State Department, and has long held the post of Assistant Secretary of State.

EDWARDS, AMELIA B.: (For Biographical Note, see Vol. I, "Famous Tales of Battle, Camp and Siege.")

IRVING, WASHINGTON: (For Biographical Note, see Vol. I, "Famous Tales of Battle, Camp and Siege.")

MCNISH, DR. ROBERT: This Scottish writer was born in Glasgow, 1802, and died in that city, 1837. He was the author of several works on medical subjects, and of a variety of miscellaneous writings, essays and stories, contributed to periodicals of that time.

O'BRIEN, FITZ-JAMES: (For Biographical Note, see Vol. V, "Famous Weird Tales.")

WELLS, H. G.: Mr. Wells is a novelist and story-writer who has attracted much attention of late years. His works run entirely on the theme of the unreal and strange, yet he pictures them so cleverly that the reality is almost startling in its intensity. His later stories deal with the world as he imagines it will be thousands of years hence, but several productions, such as "The Invisible Man," tell of strange happenings in the life of to-day.

Mr. Wells was born in Bromley, Kent, in 1866; was educated first at a private school and later at the Royal College of Science. "The Time Machine" was published in 1895. His most recent works are: "The War of the Worlds," "When the Sleeper Wakes," and "The First Men in the Moon."

THE METEMPSYCHOSIS

THE METEMPSYCHOSIS

Dr. Robert McNish

A SLIGHT shudder came over me as I was entering the inner court of the college of Göttingen. It was, however, but momentary; and on recovering from it, I felt both taller and heavier and altogether more vigorous than the instant before. Being rather nervous, I did not much mind these feelings, imputing them to some sudden determination to the brain or some unusual beating about the heart, which had assailed me suddenly, and as suddenly left me. On proceeding, I met a student coming in the opposite direction. I had never see him before, but as he passed me by he nodded familiarly—"This is a fine day, Wolstang." "What does this fellow mean?" said I to myself. "He speaks to me with as much ease as if I had been his intimate acquaintance. And he calls me Wolstang—a person to whom I bear no more resemblance than to the man in the moon." I looked after him for some time, pondering whether I should call him back and demand an explanation; but before I could form any resolution, he was out of my sight.

Thinking it needless to take any further notice of the circumstance, I went on. Another student, whom I did not know, now passed me. "Charming weather, Wolstang." "Wolstang again!" said I; "this is insufferable. Hollo, I say! what do you mean?" But at this very moment he entered the library, and either did not hear my voice or paid no attention to it.

As I was standing in a mood between rage and vexation, a batch of collegians came up, talking loud and laughing. Three, with whom I was intimately acquainted, took no notice of me; while two, to whom I was totally unknown, saluted me with, "Good-morning, Wolstang." One of these latter, after having passed me a few yards, turned round and cried out, "Wolstang, your cap is awry."

I did not know what to make of this preposterous conduct. Could it be premeditated? It was hardly possible, or I must have discovered the trick in the countenances of those who addressed me. Could it be that they really mistook me for Wolstang? This was still more incredible, for Wolstang was fully six inches taller, four stone heavier, and ten years older than I. I found myself in a maze of bewilderment in endeavoring to discover the cause of all this.

While meditating as in a reverie on these events, I was aroused by approaching steps. On looking up, I beheld the most learned Dr. Dedimus Dunderhead, provost, and professor of moral philosophy of the college. He was a man about five feet high; but so far as rotundity of corporation went, noways deficient. On the contrary, he was uncommonly fat, and his long-waisted velvet coat of office, buttoning over a capacious belly, showed underneath a pair of thick, stumpy legs, cased in short small-clothes and silk stockings, and bedizened at the knees with large buckles of silver. The doctor had on, as usual, his cocked-hat, below whose rim at each side descended the copious curls of an immense bob-wig. His large carbuncle nose was adorned with a pair of spectacles, through which he looked pompously from side to side, holding back his head in grenadier fashion, and knocking his long silver-headed baton to the earth as he walked with all the formal precision of a drum-major.

Now be it known that it is binding on every student who attends the University of Göttingen to doff his cap on meeting this illustrious personage. It may be guessed, then, what was my degree of stupefaction when I saw Dr. Dunderhead approach—when I heard his baton striking upon the ground, responsive to his steps —when I saw his large eyes, reflected through the spectacles, looking intently upon me—I say my stupefaction may be guessed, when, even on this occasion, my hand did not make one single motion upward toward my cap. The latter still stuck to my head, and I stood folded in my college gown, my mouth half open, and my eyes fixed upon the doctor in empty abstraction. I could see that he was angry at my tardy recognition of his presence; and as he came nearer me, he slackened his pace a little, as if to give me an opportunity of mending my neglect. However, I was so drowned in reflection that I did not take the hint. At last he made a sudden stop directly in front of me, folded his arms in the same manner as mine, and looked upward in my face with a fixed glance, as much as to say, "Well, master, what now?" I never thought the doctor so little, or myself so tall, as at this moment.

Having continued some time in the above attitude, he took off his hat, and made me a profound bow. "Mr. Wolstang, I am your most humble servant." Then rising up, he lifted his baton toward my cap, and knocked it off. "Your cap is awry," continued he. "Excuse me, Mr. Wolstang, it is really awry upon your head." Another bow of mockery, as profound as the first, followed this action, and he marched away, striking his baton on the ground, holding back his head, and walking with slow, pompous step down the college court.

"What the devil is the meaning of it all?" said I. "Wolstang again! Confusion, this is no trick! The

provost of the college engage in a deception upon me —impossible! They are all mad, or I am mad! Wolstang from one—Wolstang from another—Wolstang from Dr. Dedimus Dunderhead! I will see to the bottom of this—I will go to Wolstang's house immediately." So saying, I snatched up my cap, put it on my head, and walked smartly down the court to gain the street where he lived. Before I got far, a young man met me. "By-the-by, Wolstang, I wish you would let me have the ten gilders I lent you. I require them immediately." "Ten gilders!" said I; "I don't owe you a farthing. I never saw your face before, and my name is not Wolstang; it is Frederick Stadt."

"Psha! But, Wolstang, laying jesting aside," continued he, "I must positively have them."

"Have what?"

"My dear fellow, the ten gilders."

"Ten devils! I tell you, I don't owe you a farthing."

"Really, Wolstang, this joke is very silly. We know you are an odd fellow, but this is the most foolish prank I ever saw you play."

"Wolstang again!" said I, my heart boiling with indignation. "I tell you, sir—I tell you, sir, that—that ——" I could not get out another word, to such a degree had indignation confounded me. Without finishing my sentence, I rushed into the street, but not without hearing the person say, "By Heaven, he is either mad or drunk!"

In a moment I was at Wolstang's lodgings and set the knocker agoing with violence. The door was opened by his servant girl Louise, a buxom wench of some eighteen or twenty.

"Is Mr. Wolstang in?" I demanded, quickly.

"Mr. who, sir?"

"Mr. Wolstang, my dear."

"Mr. Wol—Mr. who, sir?—I did not hear you."

"Mr. Wolstang."

"Mr. Wolstang!" re-echoed the girl, with some surprise.

"Assuredly, I ask you if Mr. Wolstang is within."

"Mr. Wolstang!" reiterated she. "Ha, ha, ha! how droll you are to-day, master!"

"Damnation! what do you mean?" cried I, in a fury, which I now found it impossible to suppress. "Tell me this instant if Mr. Wolstang, your master, is at home, or by the beard of Socrates, I—I——"

"Ha, ha! this is the queerest thing I ever heard of," said the little jade, retreating into the house, and holding her sides with laughter. "Come here, Barnabas, and hear our master asking for himself."

I now thought that the rage into which I had thrown myself had excited the laughter of the wench, whom I knew very well to be of a frolicsome disposition, and much disposed to turn people into ridicule. I therefore put on as grave a face as I could—I even threw a smile into it—and said, with all the composure and good humor I could muster: "Come now, my dear—conduct me to your master—I am sure he is within." This only set her a-laughing more than ever; not a word could I get out of her. At last Barnabas made his appearance from the kitchen, and to him I addressed myself. "Barnabas," said I, laying my hand upon his arm, "I conjure you, as you value my happiness, to tell me if Mr. Wolstang is at home."

"Sir!" said Barnabas, with a long stare.

I repeated my question.

"Did you ask," replied he, "if Mr. Wolstang was at home? If that gentleman is yourself, he is at home. Oh, yes, I warrant you my master is at home."

"In what place is he, then?" I inquired.

"Wherever you are, he is not far off, I warrant you, master."

"Can I find him in his study?"

"Oh, yes," continued Barnabas; "if you go to his study, I warrant you he'll be there. Will you please to walk in, sir?" and I could see the fellow put his finger to his nose and wink to the girl, who kept tittering away in a corner. As soon as I was in the study she burst into a loud laugh, which ended by her declaring that I must be mad—"Or drunk," quoth the sapient Barnabas, in his usual dry manner.

On entering the room, no person was to be seen; but from behind a large screen, which stood fronting the fire, I heard a sneeze. "This must be Wolstang," thought I; "but it is not his sneeze, either—it is too sharp and finical for him; however, let us see." So on I went behind the screen, and there beheld, not the person I expected, but one very different—to wit, a little, meager, brown-faced, elderly gentleman, with hooked nose and chin, a long, well-powdered queue, and a wooden leg. He was dressed in a snuff-colored surtout, a scarlet waistcoat, and black small-clothes buckled at the knee; and on his nose was stuck a pair of tortoise-shell spectacles, the glasses of which were of most unusual dimensions. A dapper-looking cocked-hat lay upon the table, together with a large open snuff-box full of rich rappee. Behind his ear a pen was stuck, after the manner of the counting-house, and he seemed busily pouring over a book in manuscript.

I looked a few seconds at this oddity, equally astonished and vexed at being put into what I naturally supposed the wrong room. "I am afraid, sir," said I, as he turned his eyes toward me, "that I have intruded upon your privacy. I beg leave to apologize for the mistake. The servant led me to believe that Mr. Wolstang, with whom I wished to speak, was in his chamber."

"Don't talk of apology, my dear sir," said the little

gentleman, rising up and bowing with the utmost politeness. "Be seated, sir—be seated. Indeed, I am just here on the same errand—to see Mr. Wolstang—eh (a sneeze)—that rappee is certainly very strong. Do me the honor to occupy the seat opposite. I understand from the servants that he is expected soon." (Another sneeze.)

For the first five minutes I did not form a very high opinion of this new acquaintance. He seemed to have all the fidgety politeness and intolerable chit-chat of a French petit maître of the old school. He bored me with questions and apologies, hoped I felt myself comfortable; and every interval of his speech was filled up by intolerable giggling and sneezing. In order, as it were, to increase the latter, he kept snuffing away at a preposterous rate; and when he addressed me, his mouth was drawn up into a most complacent smile, and his long nose and chin, which threatened each other like nut-crackers, thrown forward to within a foot of my face. However, in the next five minutes he improved upon me, from some very judicious observations which he made; and in five more I became convinced that he was far from being an ordinary man. I found that he had a complete knowledge of the philosophical systems of the day; among others, that of my favorite, Kant; and on the merits of the school in the north of Germany, founded by this great metaphysician, his opinions and mine tallied to a point. He also seemed deeply conversant with the mathematics.

Let it not be supposed that all this was advanced with the formal pomp of a philosopher; on the contrary, he preserved throughout his frivolousness of manner, apologized for everything he said, hoped I was not offended if he differed in opinion from me, and concluded every position with a sneeze.

"By-the-by," said I, "what do you think of the doc-

trine of Gall and Spurzheim? I am inclined to believe there must be some truth in it; at least, I have seen it verified in a number of heads, and among others in that of Cicero, which I saw a few years ago in the sculpture-gallery of the Louvre. It was a beautiful head."

"You are right there, my dear friend," replied he. "The head, phrenologically considered, is extremely beautiful. I believe I have got it in my pocket." (A sneeze.)

"You have got the head of Cicero in your pocket!" cried I, with surprise.

"Oh, no! not absolutely the head of Cicero," said he, smiling—"Mark Antony disposed of that—but only his bust—the bust that you saw."

"You mean a miniature of that bust?"

"No—not a miniature, but the real bust. Here it comes—how heavy it is!" And, to my amazement, I saw him take out of his pocket the identical bust, as large as life, of the Roman orator, and place it on the table before me.

"Have you any more heads of this description about you?" said I, not a little marveling how he was able to stuff such a block of marble into his pocket.

"I have a few others at your service, my dear friend. Name any one you would wish to see, and I shall be most happy to produce it."

"Let me see, then, the head of Copernicus." I had scarcely spoken the word when he brought out the philosopher and put him beside Cicero. I named successively Socrates, Thales, Galileo, Confucius, Zoroaster, Tycho Brahé, Roger Bacon, and Paracelsus, and straightway they stood upon the table as fresh as if they had just received the last touch of the sculptor's chisel. I must confess that such a number of large heads emanating from the pockets of the little meager

man in the snuff-colored surtout would have occasioned me incredible wonder, had my stock of astonishment not been exhausted by the previous display of his abilities.

"And do you," I demanded, as the last-named was brought forth, "always carry those heads about with you?"

"I generally do so, for the amusement of my friends," answered he. "But do not think that my stock is exhausted; I have still a few more that I can show you—for instance, Pythagoras."

"Pythagoras!" exclaimed I; "no, don't produce him. He is the last of all the philosophers I would wish to see."

"My dear friend," said the little man, with unusual gravity, "you do not say so?"

"I do say so. Pythagoras was a fool, a madman, an imposter."

"You don't speak thus of the divine Pythagoras?" returned he, putting his bust upon the table.

"No, not of the divine Pythagoras, for such a person never existed. I speak of Pythagoras the Samian—him of the golden thigh, the founder of what is called the Pythagorean philosophy."

"And the most rational system of philosophy that ever existed. Begging your pardon, I think it goes far beyond that of Plato or the Stagyrite."

"If you mean that it goes beyond them in being as full of absurdity as they are of wisdom, I really agree with you," said I, my anger rising at hearing the divine doctrines of Aristotle and the disciple of Socrates so irreverently spoken of.

"Pray, what were its absurdities?" asked he, with the most imperturbable good nature.

"Ah, well, did he not forbid the use of animal food to his followers? and, to crown all, did he not teach the

monstrous doctrine of transmigration of souls—sending the spirits of men, after death, to inhabit the bodies of dogs, and cats, and frogs, and geese, and even insects?"

"And call you this a monstrous doctrine?"

"Monstrous!" I exclaimed with surprise—"it is the ne plus ultra, the climax of fatuity, the raving of a disordered imagination."

"So you do not believe in metempsychosis?" asked he, with a smile.

"I would as soon believe in demonology or magic. There is nothing I would not rather credit. But perhaps you are a believer." He shrugged up his shoulders at this last remark, stroked his chin, and, giving me a sarcastic look, said, with a familiar nod and smile, "Yes, I am a believer."

"What!" said I, "you—you, with your immense learning, can you put faith in such doctrines?"

"If I put faith in them," said he, "it is my learning which has taught me to do so."

"And do you really go all the length of Pythagoras?" I demanded.

"I not only go all his length, but I go much farther. For instance, he believed that the soul never left the body until the latter was dead. Now, my belief is that two living bodies may exchange souls with each other. For instance, your soul may take possession of my body, and my soul of yours, and both our bodies may be alive."

"In that case," said I, laughing heartily, "you would be me, and I would be you."

"Precisely so, my dear friend," replied the little gentleman, laughing in his turn, and concluding with a sneeze.

"Faith, my good sir," my reverence for his abilities

somewhat lessened by this declaration, "I am afraid you have lost your senses."

"I am afraid you have lost something of more importance," returned he, with a smile, in which I thought I recognized a tinge of derision. I did not like it, so, eyeing him with some sternness, I said, hastily, "And pray, what have I lost?" Instead of answering me, he burst into a loud fit of laughter, holding his sides while the tears ran down his cheeks, and he seemed half stifled with a flood of irresistible merriment. My passion at this rose to such a pitch that had he been a man of any appearance I should have knocked him down; but I could not think of resorting to such an extremity with a meager, little, elderly fellow, who had, moreover, a wooden leg. I could therefore only wait till his mirth subsided, when I demanded, with as much calmness as I could assume, what I had lost.

"Are you sure you have not lost your body?" said he.

"My body!" answered I, with some surprise; "what do you mean?"

"Now, my dear friend, tell me plainly; are you sure that this is your own body?"

"My own body—who the devil's can it be?"

"Are you sure you are yourself?"

"Myself—who, in Heaven's name, could I be but myself?"

"Ay, that is the rub," continued he; "are you perfectly satisfied that you are yourself, and nobody but yourself?" I could not help smiling at the apparent stupidity of this question; but before I was able to compose myself, he had resumed his query—"Are you sure you are—that you are——"

"That I am who?" said I, hurriedly.

"That you are Frederick Stadt?"

"Perfectly."

"And not Albert Wolstang?" concluded he.

A pang shot through my whole body at this last part of his question. I recalled in an instant all my previous vexation. I remembered the insults I had met with, not only from the students of Göttingen and Dr. Dedimus Dunderhead, but from the domestics of Wolstang; and lastly, I recollected the business which had brought me to the house of the latter. Everything came as a flash of lightning through my brain, and I was more perplexed than ever. At length, arousing myself from my stupor, I put the following question to him:

"Did you ask me if I was sure that I am not Wolstang?"

"I did sir," answered he, with a bow.

"Then, sir, I must tell you that I am not that person, but Frederick Stadt, student of philosophy in the University of Göttingen." He looked incredulous.

"What, sir," said I; "do you not believe me?" He shrugged up his shoulders.

"It is impossible, sir," said I, "that you can mistake me for Wolstang—seeing that, on my entry, you told me you expected that gentleman in a short time, and desired me to be seated till he came in." At this he seemed a little disconcerted, and was beginning to mutter something in explanation, when I interrupted him—"Besides, sir, Wolstang is a man at least six inches taller, four stone heavier, and ten years older than I."

"What an immense fellow he must be, my dear friend! At that rate, he ought to stand six feet eight inches, and weigh twenty stone."

I could hardly retain my gravity at this calculation. "Pray, what do you take my stature and weight to be?"

"I should take you," replied he, "to be about six feet two inches high, and to weigh about sixteen stone."

This admeasurement raised my merriment to its acme, and I laughed aloud. "Know, then, my good little man, that all your geometry has availed you nothing,

for I only stand five feet eight and never weighed more than twelve stone." He shrugged up his shoulders once more, and put on another of his incredulous looks.

"Eh, eh—I may be mistaken—but I—I——"

"Mistaken!" exclaimed I; "zounds, you were never more egregiously mistaken, even when you advocated the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis!"

"I may be wrong, but I could lay five gilders that I am right. I never bet high—just a trifle occasionally."

"You had better keep your gilders in your pocket," said I, "and not risk them so foolishly."

"With your permission, however, I shall back my pieces against yours"—and he drew five from a little green silk purse, and put them on the table. I deposited an equal number.

"Now," said I, "how is this dispute to be settled? Where can I get myself weighed?"

"I believe," answered he, "there is a pair of scales in the room hard by, and weights, too, if I mistake not." He accordingly got up and opened the door of the adjoining chamber, where, to my surprise, I beheld a pair of immense scales hanging from the roof, and hundred and half-hundred weights, etc., lying around. I seated myself on one of the scales, chuckling very heartily at the scrape into which the little fellow had brought himself. He lifted up weight after weight, placing them upon the opposite scale. Eleven stone had been put in, and he was lifting the twelfth. "Now," says I, eyeing him waggishly, "for your five gilders." He dropped the weight, but the beam never moved, and I still sat on the lowest scale. Thirteen were put on, and my weight yet triumphed. With amazement I saw fourteen and fifteen successively added to the number, without effect. At last, on putting down the sixteenth, the scale on which I sat was gently raised from the ground. I turned my eyes upward toward the

needle, which I saw quivering as if uncertain where to stop; at last it paused exactly in the center, and stood erect; the beam lay perfectly horizontal, and I sat motionless, poised in middle air.

"You will observe, sir, that my calculation was correct," observed my companion, taking a fresh pinch of snuff. "You are just sixteen stone. Nothing now remains but to measure your height."

"There is no occasion for that," I replied, rising slowly from the scale. "If you can contrive to make me weigh sixteen stone, you can readily make me measure six feet two inches." I now threw myself down on a seat in the study, which both of us had reentered, placed my elbows on the table, and buried my face in my hands, absorbed in deep reflection. I thought and thought again upon every event which had befallen me since the morning. The whole formed a combination which I found myself utterly unable to comprehend. In a few minutes I looked up, exhausted with vain thought. All the heads were gone except that of Pythagoras, which he left lying in its place. He now took up his snuff-box and deposited it in his waistcoat pocket; drew an old-fashioned watch out of his fob, and looked at the hour; and, lastly, laying his hand upon the ten gilders, he dropped them one by one into his green purse. "I believe," said he, with a smile, "the money is mine." So saying, he snatched up his little cocked-hat, made me half-a-dozen of bows, and bade me adieu, after promising to see me at the same time and place two days after.

Again did I bury my face in my hands; again did my fit of meditation come on; I felt my bosom glowing with perplexity. It was now the scales which occupied my thoughts, to the exclusion of everything else. "Sixteen stone!—impossible, I cannot believe it. This

old rascal has cheated me. The weights he has put on must be defective—they must be hollow. I will see to it in a moment, and if there has been any deception, I shall break his bones the first time I set my eyes upon him, mauger his wooden leg; I will at least smash his spectacles, trip up his heels, and pull his hook nose." Full of these resolutions, I proceeded to the adjoining room. Guess of my amazement when, instead of the great machines in which I had been weighed but ten minutes before, I beheld nothing but a small pair of apothecary's scales, and a few drachm, scruple, and grain weights scattered upon the floor.

Not knowing what to make of this, I returned to the study, when, happening to look into a mirror placed behind the chair on which I had been sitting, I beheld (joyous sight) the reflection of Wolstang. "Ah, you have come?" said I, turning round to receive him, but nobody was to be seen. I looked again through every part of the room; no Wolstang was there. This was passing strange; where could the man have gone in such a hurry? I was now in a greater fright than ever, when, casting my eyes a second time upon the mirror, he again made his appearance. I instantly looked round—no one was present; in another instant I turned to the glass, and there stood the reflection as before. Not knowing what this phenomenon could be, and thinking perhaps that my eyes were dazzled by some phantom, I raised my hands, and rubbed them; Wolstang did the same. I struck my forehead, bit my lip with vexation, and started back, when, marvelous to relate, the figure in the glass repeated all my gestures. I now got alarmed, and, shrinking away from the apparition, threw myself upon the chair. In a few minutes, my courage being somewhat revived, I ventured to face the mirror, but without any better success—the same object presented itself. I desisted, and renewed

the trial three several times, with the like result. In vain was my philosophy exerted to unfold this mystery. The doctrines of Aristotle, the dreams of alchemy, and the wonders of the Cabala presented themselves in succession to my disordered fancy. All was in vain; nothing could account for the present occurrence; nothing in mystical or scientific lore bore any analogy to it.

In this perturbed state of mind my eye caught the bust of Pythagoras. This was a flood of light to my understanding. I instantly remembered what the old fellow had hinted about the transmigration of souls; I remembered what he said about me being myself or another person. Then connecting this with the previous events of the day, with the Göttingen students, with Dr. Dedimus Dunderhead, with Wolstang's domestics, and lastly with the reflection in the looking-glass—I say, coupling all these thing together, I came to the horrible conclusion that I was not myself. "There must be some truth in the Pythagorean doctrine, and I am laboring under a metempsychosis."

It would be a vain attempt for me to describe the horror I endured at this dreadful transmogrification. After the first burst of dismay was over, I wept bitterly, bewailing the loss of my dear body, which I now felt convinced was gone from me forever. "And poor Wolstang," cried I, lamentably, "you are no longer yourself. You are me, and I am you; and doubtless you are deploring your misfortune as bitterly as your unhappy friend Stadt."

Night was now coming on, and it became necessary that I should resolve upon what ought to be done in my present state. I soon perceived that it would serve no purpose to say that I was myself; no one would have believed me, and I would run the risk of being put in a strait-jacket as a lunatic. To avoid these evils, there

was no resource but to pass myself off upon the community as Wolstang.

In order to cool my heated brain, I went out into the open air and wandered about the streets. I was addressed by a number of persons whom I did not know; and several of my acquaintances, to whom I inadvertently spoke, did not know me. With the former I was very short, answering their questions at random, and getting off as soon as possible. To the latter I could only apologize, assuring them that they had been mistaken by me for other persons. I felt my situation most unpleasant; for, besides the consciousness of no longer being myself, I was constantly running into the most perplexing blunders. For instance, after strolling about for a considerable period, I came, as it were, by a sort of instinct, to my own lodgings. For a time I forgot my situation, and knocked at the door. It was opened by my domestic, from whom I took the candle which he held in his hand, and, according to wont, walked into the study. "Mr. Stadt is not in, sir," said the man, following me; "perhaps you will sit till he comes; I expect him soon." This aroused me from my reverie, confirming too truly the fact that I was changed. I started up from the seat into which I had dropped, rushed past him and gained the street. Here I made up my mind to return to Wolstang's lodgings, which I accordingly did, in a mood which a condemned criminal would hardly envy.

I kept the house for the whole of next day, employing myself in writing, in order that the servants might at least see some cause for my confinement. Notwithstanding this, it was easy to observe that they perceived something unusual about me; and several remarks which escaped them convinced me that they considered my head touched in no slight degree. Although I did all that I was able to compose myself, it was impossible

that I could think like Wolstang, and still less that I could know a hundred private and household matters on which the pert Louise and sapient Barnabas made a point of consulting me. Whenever I was spoken to concerning things that I knew, my answers were kind and condescending; but on any point about which I was ignorant, I utterly lost temper, and peremptorily forbade them to repeat it. Both shook their heads at such inconsistent behavior; and it was soon bruited among the neighbors that Mr. Albert Wolstang had parted with his senses.

The second day arrived, and found me in the same state of mind. The amazement which succeeded the discovery of my metamorphosis had indeed given way, but my feelings were still as imbittered as ever, and I ardently longed for death to put an end to such intolerable misery. While brooding over these matters, the door of the study opened. Thinking it was one of the domestics, I paid no attention to it; but in a moment I heard a sneeze, which made my flesh creep, and in another the little man with the snuff-colored surtout, the scarlet waistcoat, and the wooden leg made his appearance. Since I last saw this old fellow, I had conceived a mortal hatred against him. I thought, although the idea was wild enough, that he had some hand in my metempsychosis—and the affair of the scales and the marble busts, together with his Pythagorean opinions, his vast learning, his geomancy and astrology, gave to my idea a strong confirmation. On the present occasion his politeness was excessive; he bowed almost to the ground, made fifty apologies for intruding, and inquired, with the most outré affectation of tenderness, into the state of my health. He then seated himself opposite to me, laid his cocked-hat upon the table, took a pinch of snuff, and commenced his intolerable system of sneezing. I was never less in a humor to

relish anything like foppery; so throwing myself back upon the chair, putting on as commanding a look as I could, and looking at him fiercely, I said: "So, sir, you are back again; I suppose you know me?"

"Know you, my dear friend—eh—yes, I derived great pleasure in being made acquainted with you the day before yesterday. You are Mr. Frederick Stadt—that is to say, you are Mr. Albert Wolstang." (A sneeze.)

"Then you know that I am not myself?"

"My dear friend," replied he, with a smile, "I hinted as much the last time I saw you."

"And pray how did you ascertain that?"

"You don't ask me such a question," said he, with an air of surprise; "I knew it by your own signature."

"My own signature! I know not what you mean by my signature."

"Eh—eh—the signature, you know—that is, the compact you made with Wolstang."

"I know of no compact," cried I, in a passion; "nor did I ever make one with any man living. I defy either you or Wolstang to produce any such instrument."

"I believe it is in my pocket at this very moment. Look here, my dear sir." And he brought out a small manuscript book, and, turning up the leaves, pointed to view the following words:

"I hereby, in consideration of the sum of fifty gilders, give to Albert Wolstang the use of my body, at any time he is disposed, provided that, for the time being, he gives me the use of his.—Frederick Stadt."

"It is a damnable forgery," said I, starting up with fury; "a deceptio visûs at least—something like your scales."

"What about the scales, my dear friend?" said he, with a whining voice.

"Go," replied I, "into that room, and you shall see."

He accordingly went, but returned immediately, saying that he observed nothing remarkable. "No!" said I, rising up; "then I shall take the trouble to point it out to you." My astonishment may be better conceived than described when, instead of the small apothecary's scales, I beheld the immense ones in which I had been weighed two days before. I felt confounded and mortified, and returned with him to the study, muttering something about deceptio visûs, necromancy, and demonology.

"Well," continued I, after recovering a little, "what about this compact—when and where was it made?"

"It was made some three days ago, at the Devil's Hoof Tavern. You may remember that you and Wolstang were drinking there at that time."

"Yes, I remember it well enough; but I understood that I was putting my name to a receipt for fifty gilders which he paid me. I never read the writing; I merely subscribed it."

"That was a pity; for really you have bound yourself as firmly as signing with a person's own blood can do."

"Did I sign it with my own blood?" said I, alarmed.

"Exactly so. You may recollect of cutting your finger. I had the pleasure of stanching the blood, sufficient of which was, nevertheless, collected to write this document."

"Then you were present," said I—"yes, I have a recollection of your face, now that you mention the circumstance. You were then dressed as a clergyman, if I mistake not."

"Precisely."

"And what," continued I, "are the conditions on which I hold this strange existence? Suppose Wolstang dies?"

"Then you keep his body till the natural period of your own death."

"Suppose I die?"

"He then keeps your body."

"Then, if he dies, my body is buried and goes to decay, while I am clogged up in his body till relieved from it by death?"

"Precisely."

This announcement struck me with terror. "And shall I never," said I, weeping, "see my dear body again?"

"You may see it if ever Wolfstang comes in your way."

"But shall I never possess it—shall I never be myself again?"

"Not unless he pleases."

"The villain!" exclaimed I, in an agony of grief; "I am then undone—the tool of a heartless, unprincipled miscreant. Is my case hopeless?"

"Oh no, my dear friend," said the little man, "not at all hopeless; there is nothing simpler than the remedy. Only put your name here, and you will be yourself in a minute. The fellow will then lose all power over your body." I seized with avidity the pen which he presented to me, dipped it in a vial of red ink, and was proceeding to do as he directed, when the writing above caught my eye. It ran thus:

"I hereby engage, after my natural decease, to give over my soul to the owner of this book."

"Zounds!" said I, "what is this?"

"It is nothing at all; just a form—a mere form of business, of no intrinsic meaning. If you would just write your name—it is very easily done."

"Has any other person signed such a deed?" demanded I.

"Many a one. Here, for example, is Wolstang's name attached to a similar contract. It is, in fact, by virtue of this that he has the power over your body.

The deed which you have signed would have availed him nothing without this one."

"Then," said I, "if you relieve me from my present condition, you break faith with Wolstang, seeing that you deprive him of his stipulated power."

"I deprive him of his power over you, but I give him in return power over some other person, which will answer his purpose equally well. I think you had better sign."

"No, you old villain!" said I, wrought up to a pitch of fury at the infernal plan which I saw he was meditating, "I will never sign your damnable compact. I have religion enough to know the value of my soul, and sufficient philosophy to bear with any wretchedness I may endure under my present form. You may play the devil if you choose, but you shall never get me to act the part of Dr. Faustus." I pronounced these words in a voice of thunder; but, so far from being angry, he used every endeavor to soothe me—made a thousand apologies for having been the unwilling cause of such a commotion; then, snatching up his hat and making a profound bow, he left the room.

A glow of conscious virtue passed over me on his departure. I found that I had resisted evil, and gloried in the thought; but this triumphant feeling gave way to one of revenge against the author of my calamity. After reflecting for a short time, it occurred to me that the best way to punish him would be to commit some outrage which might stamp him with infamy, and render him miserable if he ever thought of resuming his body. "I shall at least have him expelled from the university. This shall be the first blow directed against his comfort. He will in time become weary of my body and will find very little satisfaction in his own when he takes it into his head to make an exchange." Full of

these ideas, I entered the college court, where the first object that met my eyes was Dr. Dedimus Dunderhead coming toward me—his baton of office in his hand, spectacles on his carbuncle nose, and his head thrown back as he strutted along à la militaire. Without a moment's hesitation I advanced up to him and knocked off his cocked-hat; nor did I stop to see how he looked at this extraordinary salutation, but walked deliberately on. I heard him distinctly call after me, "You shall hear of this, sir, by to-morrow." "When you please, doctor," was my answer. "Now, Master Wolstang," said I to myself, "I have driven you from Göttingen college, and wish you much joy of your expulsion." Such were my thoughts, and the morrow verified them; for, a meeting of the Senatus Academicus being summoned by the provost, that learned body declared Albert Wolstang unfit to be a member of the university, and he was accordingly placarded upon the gate and expelled in terrorem.

This circumstance, being just what I wanted, gave me no uneasiness; but a few days thereafter an event arose out of it which subjected me to much inconvenience. Having unwittingly strolled into the college, I was rudely collared by one of the officers, which so enraged me that I knocked down the fellow with a blow of my fist. For this I was apprehended the same day by three gendarmes, and carried before the Syndic, who condemned me to suffer two weeks close confinement, and to be fed on bread and water. This punishment, though perhaps not disproportioned to the offence, was, in my estimation, horribly severe; and now, for the first time, did I feel regret for the absurdity of my conduct. I found that in endeavoring to punish Wolstang I was in truth only punishing myself, and that it was a matter of doubt whether he would ever submit to a corporeal change, seeing that my fortune

was much more considerable than his own, and that he would come at it in the course of six months. This, I had no doubt, was the chief consideration that induced the fellow to bring about such a metamorphosis.

On getting out of prison I was the most miserable wretch on earth. The fierce desire of vengeance had formerly kept up my spirits; but this was now gone, and they sank to the lowest pitch. I found that I was spurned by those very persons who were before most anxious to cultivate my friendship. Barnabas and Louise had left me, resolving no longer to serve one who had undergone the punishment of a malefactor. In order to clear up matters, I frequently called at my own house to inquire if I myself was at home—for so was I obliged to speak of the miscreant who had possession of my body; but on every occasion I was answered in the negative. "I had gone out to see a friend in town;" "I had gone to the country;" "I was expected soon." Never by any possibility could I get a sight of myself. All this convinced me that the case was hopeless, and that I must make the best of my deplorable situation.

In consequence of the peculiar opportunities which I enjoyed, I soon discovered that Wolstang, whom I had long thought rather highly of, was in reality a very bad character. Some persons of the worst description in Göttingen appeared to have been his associates. Times without number I was accosted as an acquaintance by gamblers, pickpockets, usurers, and prostitutes; and through their means I unravelled a train of imposture, profligacy, and dissipation in which he had been long deeply involved. I found out even worse than this—at least what I dreaded much more. This was a forgery to an immense amount, which he, in concert with another person, had committed on an extensive mercantile house. The accomplice, in a high

state of trepidation, came to tell me that the whole was in a fair way of being blown, and that if we wished to save our necks an instantaneous departure from the city was indispensable. Such a piece of intelligence threw me into great alarm. If I remained, my apprehension would be inevitable; and how would it be possible for me to persuade any one that I was not Wolstang? My conviction and execution must follow; and though I was now so regardless of life that I would gladly have been in my grave, yet there was something revolting in the idea of dying for a villain, merely because I could not show that I was not myself. These reflections had their due weight, and I resolved to leave Göttingen next day, and escape from the country altogether.

While meditating upon this scheme, I walked about three miles out of town for the purpose of maturing my plans undisturbed by the noise and bustle of the streets. As I was going slowly along, I perceived a man walking about a furlong before me. His gait and dress arrested my attention particularly, and after a few glances I was convinced that he must be myself. The joy that pervaded my mind at the sight no language can describe; it was as a glimpse of Heaven, and filled me with perfect ecstasy. Prudence, however, did not forsake me, and I resolved to steal slowly upon him, collar him, and demand an explanation. With this view I approached him, concealing myself as well as I could, and was so successful that I had actually got within ten yards of my prey without being discovered. At this instant, hearing footsteps, he turned round, looked alarmed, and took to his heels. I was after him in a moment, and the flight on one side and pursuit on the other were keenly contested. Thanks to Wolstang's long legs, they were better than the short ones with which my antagonist was furnished, and I caught him

by the collar as he was about to enter a wood. I grasped my body with Herculean grip, so terrified was I to lose it. "And now, you villain," said I, as soon as I could recover breath, "tell me the meaning of this. Restore me my body, or by Heaven I will——"

"You will do what?" asked he, with the most insolent coolness. This question was a dagger to my soul, for I knew that any punishment I inflicted upon him must be inflicted upon myself. I stood mute for a few seconds, still holding him strongly in my grasp. At last, throwing pity aside, by one vast effort I cried out, "I declare solemnly, Wolstang, that if you do not give me back my body I shall kill you on the spot."

"Kill me on the spot!" replied he. "Do you mean to say that you will kill your own body?"

"I do say so," was my answer. "I will rather destroy my dear body, than it should be disgraced by a scoundrel like you."

"You are jesting," said Wolstang, endeavoring to extricate himself.

"I shall show you the contrary," rejoined I, giving him a violent blow on the nose, and another on the ribs. These strokes almost drew tears from my eyes; and when I saw my precious blood flowing, I certainly would have wept aloud, but for the terrible energy which rage had given me. The punishment had its evident effect, however, upon Wolstang, for he became agitated and alarmed, grew pale, and entreated me to let him go. "Never, you villain, till you return me back my body. Let me be myself again, and then you are free."

"That is impossible," said he, "and cannot be done without the agency of another person, who is absent; but I hereby solemnly swear that five days after my death your body shall be your own."

"If better terms cannot be had, I must take even

these, but better I shall have; so prepare to part with what is not your own. Take yourself back again, or I will beat you to a mummy." So saying, I laid on him most unmercifully—flattened his nose (or rather my own), and laid him sprawling on the earth without ceremony. While engaged in this business, I heard a sneeze, and, looking to the quarter from which it proceeded, whom did I see emerging from the wood but my old acquaintance with the snuff-colored surtout, the scarlet waistcoat, and wooden leg. He saluted me as usual with a smile, and was beginning to regret the length of time which had elapsed since he last had the pleasure of seeing me, when I interrupted him. "Come," said I; "this is not a time for ridiculous grimace; you know all about it; so help me to get my body back from this scoundrel here."

"Certainly, my dear friend. Heaven forbid that you should be robbed of so unalienable a property. Wolstang, you must give it up. 'Tis the height of injustice to deprive him of it."

"Shall I surrender it, then?" said Wolstang, with a pitiable voice.

"By all means; let Mr. Stadt have his body."

In an instant I felt great pains shoot through me, and I lay on the ground, breathless and exhausted as if from some dreadful punishment. I also saw the little gentleman, and the tall, stout figure of Wolstang, walk away arm in arm, and enter the wood. I was now myself again, but had at first little cause of congratulation on the change, while the unprincipled author of my calamities was moving off in his own body without a single scratch. If my frame was in bad case, however, my mind felt relieved beyond conception. A load was taken from it, and it felt the consciousness of being encased in that earthly tenement destined by Heaven for its habitation.

Alas, how transient is human happiness! Scarcely had an hour elapsed when a shudder came over me, precisely similar to that which occurred some weeks before on entering the college of Göttingen. I also perceived that I was stronger, taller, and more vigorous, and, as if by magic, totally free of pain. At this change a horrid sentiment came across me, and, on looking at my shadow in a well, I observed that I was no longer myself, but Wolstang; the diabolical miscreant had again effected a metempsychosis. Full of distracting ideas, I wandered about the fields till nightfall, when I returned into the city, and threw myself into bed, overpoured with fatigue and grief.

Next day I made a point of calling at my own house, and inquiring for myself. The servant said that I could not be seen, being confined to bed in consequence of several bruises received in an encounter with two highwaymen. I called next day and was still confined. On the third I did the same, but I had gone out with a friend. On the fourth I learned that I was dead.

It will readily be believed that this last intelligence was far from being unwelcome. On hearing of my own death I felt the most lively pleasure, anticipating the period when I would be myself again. That period, according to Wolstang's solemn vow, would arrive in five days. Three of these I had spent in the house, carefully secluding myself from observation, when I heard a sneeze at the outside of the door. It opened, and in stepped the little man with the snuff-colored surtout, the scarlet waistcoat, and the wooden leg. I had conceived a dislike approaching to horror at this rascal, whom I naturally concluded to be at the bottom of these diabolical transformations; I, however, contained my wrath until I should hear what he had to say.

"I wish you much joy, my dear friend, that you are going to resume your own body. There is, however,

one circumstance which perhaps you have overlooked. Are you aware that you are to be buried to-day?"

"I never thought of it," answered I, calmly, "nor is it of any consequence, I presume. In two days I shall be myself again. I shall then leave this body behind me, and take possession of my own."

"And where will your own body be then?"

"In the grave," said I, with a shudder, as the thought came across me.

"Precisely so, and you will enjoy the pleasure of being buried alive; that, I suppose, you have not calculated upon."

This remark struck me with blank dismay, and I fell back on my chair, uttering a deep groan. "Is there then no hope? cannot this dreadful doom be averted? must I be buried alive?"

"The case is rather a hard one, Mr. Stadt, but perhaps not without a remedy."

"Yes, there is a remedy," cried I, starting up and striking my forehead. "I will hie me to my own house, and entreat them to suspend the funeral for two days."

"I saw the undertaker's men enter the house, as I passed by, for the purpose, I should think, of screwing down the coffin-lid. However," continued he, taking a pinch of snuff, "you may try; and if you fail, I have a scheme in view which will perhaps suit your purpose. I shall await your return."

In a moment my hat was on my head, in another I was out of the room, and in a third at my own house. What he had stated was substantially true. Some of the mourners had arrived, and the undertaker's men were waiting below, till they should be summoned upstairs to screw down the lid. Without an instant of delay I rushed to the chamber where my dear body was lying in its shell. Some of my friends were there, and I entreated them, in imploring accents, to stop for

two days, and they would see that the corpse which lay before them would revive. "I am not dead," cried I, forgetting myself—"I assure you I am not dead."

"Poor fellow! he has lost his senses," said one.

"I assure you I am not dead," said I, throwing myself upon my knees before my cousin, who was present.

"I know that, my good fellow," was his answer, "but poor Stadt, you see, is gone forever."

"That is not Stadt—it is I—it is I—will you not believe me? I am Stadt—this is not me—I am not myself. For Heaven's sake suspend this funeral." Such were my exclamations, but they produced no other effect but that of pity among the bystanders.

"Poor, unfortunate fellow, he is crazed. Get a porter and let him be taken home."

This order, which was given by my cousin himself, stung me to madness, and, changing my piteous tones for those of fierce resistance, I swore that "I would not turn out for any man living. I would not be buried alive to please them." To this nobody made any reply, but in the course of a minute four stout porters made their appearance, and I was forced from the house.

Returning to Wolstang's lodgings, the old man was there in waiting, as he promised. "What," said I, with trepidation—"what is the scheme you were to propose? Tell me, and avert the horrible doom which will await me, for they have refused to suspend the funeral."

"My dear friend," said he, in the most soothing manner, "your case is far from being so bad as you apprehend. You have just to write your name in this book, and you will be yourself again in an instant. Instead of coming alive in the grave, you will be alive before the coffin-lid is put on. Only think of the difference of the two situations."

"A confounded difference, indeed," thought I, taking

hold of the pen. But at the very moment when I was going to write, I observed, above, the following words:

"I hereby engage, after my natural decease, to give over my soul to the owner of this book."

"What!" said I, "this is the old compact; the one you wished me to sign before."

"The same, my dear friend."

"Then I'll be d—d if I sign it."

"Only think of the consequences," said he.

"I will abide the consequences rather than sell my soul."

"Buried alive, my dear sir—only think."

"I will not sign the compact."

"Only think of being buried alive," continued he—"stifled to death—pent up on all sides—earth above, earth below—no hope—no room to move in—suffocated, stupefied, horrorstruck—utter despair. Is not the idea dreadful?"

I gave a shudder at this picture, which was drawn with horrible truth; but the energies of religion and the hopes of futurity rushed upon my soul and sustained it in the dreadful trial. "Away, away," said I, pushing him back. "I have made up my mind to the sacrifice, since better may not be. Whatever happens to my body, I am resolved not to risk my eternal soul for its sake."

"Think again," said he, "and make up your mind. If I leave you, your fate is irrevocable. Are you decided?"

"I am."

"Only reflect once more. Consider how, by putting your name in this book, you will save yourself from a miserable death. Are you decided?"

"I am," replied I, firmly.

"Then, fool," said he, while a frown perfectly unnatural to him corrugated his brow, and his eyes shot

forth vivid glances of fire—"then, fool, I leave you to your fate. You shall never see me again." So saying, he walked out of the room, dispensing with his usual bows and grimaces, and dashing the door fiercely after him, while I threw myself upon a couch in an agony of despair.

My doom was now sealed; for, on going to the windows a few minutes thereafter, I beheld my own funeral, with my cousin at the head of the procession, acting as chief mourner. In a short time I saw the company returning from the interment. "All is over, then," said I, wringing my hands at the deplorable sight. "I am the victim of some infernal agency, and must prepare for the dreadful sacrifice." That night I was supremely wretched, tossing incessantly in bed, while sleep was denied to my wearied eyelids. Next morning my haggard look was remarked by my servant, who proposed sending for a physician; but this I would not allow, knowing that woe like mine was beyond the reach of medicine. The day after was the last I was to behold upon the earth. It came, and I endeavored by every means to subdue the terror which it brought along with it. On arising from bed, I sent for my servant, an elderly woman whom I had got to supply the place of Barnabas and Louise, and gave her one hundred gilders, being all the money I could find in Wolstang's bureau. "Now, Philippa," said I, "as soon as the clock of the study has struck three, come in, and you will find me dead. Retire, and do not enter till then." She went away, promising to do all that I had ordered her.

During the interval I sat opposite the clock, marking the hours pass rapidly by. Every tick was as a death-knell to my ear—every movement of the hands, as the motion of a scimitar leveled to cut me in pieces. I heard all and I saw all in horrid silence. Two o'clock at length struck. "Now," said I, "there is but one

hour for me on earth—then the dreadful struggle begins—then I must live again in the tomb, only to perish miserably." Half an hour passed, then forty minutes, then fifty, then fifty-five. I saw with utter despair the minute-hand go by the latter, and approach the meridian number of the dial. As it swept on, a stupor fell over my spirit, a mist swam before my eyes, and I almost lost the power of consciousness. At last I heard one strike aloud—my flesh creeped with dread; then two—I gave a universal shudder; then three, and I gasped convulsively, and saw and heard nothing further.

At this moment I was sensible of an insufferable coldness. My heart fluttered, then it beat strong, and the blood, passing as it were over my chilled frame, gave it warmth and animation. I also began by slow degrees to breathe. But though my bodily feelings were thus torpid, my mental ones were very different. They were on the rack; for I knew that I was now buried alive, and that the dreadful struggle was about to commence. I was terrified to move, because I knew I would feel the horrid walls of my narrow prison-house. I was terrified to breathe, because the pent air within it would be exhausted, and the suffocation of struggling humanity would seize upon me. I was even terrified to open my eyes, and gaze upon the eternal darkness by which I was surrounded. Could I resist? —the idea was madness. What would my strength avail against the closed coffin, and the pressure above, below, and on every side?

Meanwhile I felt the necessity of breathing, and I did breathe fully; and the air was neither so close nor scanty as might have been supposed. This struck me as very singular; and being naturally of an inquisitive disposition, I felt an irresistible wish, even in my dreadful situation, to investigate, if possible, the cause of it.

"The coffin must be unconscionably large." This was my first idea; and to ascertain it, I slightly raised my hands, shuddering at the same time at the thought of their coming in contact with the lid above me. However, they encountered no lid. Up, up, up I elevated them, and met with nothing. I then groped to the sides, but the coffin laterally seemed equally capacious; no sides were to be found. "This is certainly a most extraordinary shell to bury a man of my size in. I shall try if possible to ascertain its limits before I die—suppose I endeavor to stand upright." The thought no sooner came across my mind than I carried it into execution. I got up, raising myself by slow degrees, in case of knocking my head against the lid. Nothing, however, impeded my extension, and I stood straight. I even raised my hands on high, to feel if it were possible to reach the top: no such thing; the coffin was apparently without bounds. Altogether, I felt more comfortable than a buried man could expect to be. One thing struck me, and it was this—I had no grave-clothes upon me. "But," thought I, "this is easily accounted for; my cousin comes to my property, and the scoundrel has adopted the most economical means of getting rid of me." I had not as yet opened my eyes, being daunted at the idea of encountering the dreary darkness of the grave. But my courage being somewhat augmented by the foregoing events, I endeavored to open them. This was impossible; and on examination, I found that they were bandaged, my head being encircled with a fillet. On endeavoring to loosen it, I lost my balance, and tumbled down with a hideous noise. I did not merely fall upon the bottom of the coffin, as might be expected; on the contrary, I seemed to roll off it, and fell lower, as it were, into some vault underneath. In endeavoring to arrest this strange descent, I caught hold of the coffin, and pulled

it on the top of me. Nor was this all; for, before I could account for such a train of extraordinary accidents below ground, and while yet stupefied and bewildered, I heard a door open, and, in an instant after, human voices. "What, in Heaven's name, can be the meaning of this?" ejaculated I, involuntarily. "Is it a dream?—am I asleep or am I awake? Am I dead or alive?" While meditating thus, and struggling to extricate myself from the coffin, I heard someone say distinctly, "Good God, he is come alive!" At the same instant the fillet was drawn from my eyes. I opened them with amazement; instead of the gloom of death, the glorious light of heaven burst upon them! I was confounded; and, to add to my surprise, I saw supporting me two men, with whose faces I was familiar. I gazed at the one, then at the other, with looks of fixed astonishment. "What is this?" said I; "where am I?"

"You must remain quiet," said the eldest, with a smile. "We must have you put to bed, and afterward dressed."

"What is this?" continued I; "am I not dead? was I not buried?"

"Hush, my dear friend—let me throw this great-coat over you."

"But I must speak," said I, my senses still wandering. "Where am I? who are you?"

"Do you not know me?"

"Yes," replied I, gazing at him intently—"my friend, Dr. Wunderdudt. Good God! how do you happen to be here? Did I not come alive in the grave?"

"You may thank us that you did not," said he. "Look around, and say if you know where you are."

I looked, as he directed, and found myself in a large room fitted up with benches, and having half a dozen skeletons dangling from the roof. At last I satisfied

myself that I was in the anatomical theater of the university.

"But," said I, "there is something in all this that I cannot comprehend. What—where is the coffin?"

"What coffin, my dear fellow?" said Wunderdudt.

"The coffin that I was in."

"The coffin!" said he, smiling; "I suppose it remains where it was put the day before yesterday."

I rubbed my eyes with vexation, not knowing what to make of these perplexing circumstances. "I mean," said I, "the coffin—the coffin I drew over upon me when I fell."

"I do not know of any coffin," answered he, laughing heartily; "but I know very well that you have pulled upon yourself my good mahogany table; there it lies." And on looking, I observed the large table, which stood in the middle of the hall, overturned upon the floor. Dr. Wunderdudt (he was professor of anatomy to the college) now made me retire, and he put me in bed till clothing could be procured. But I would not allow him to depart till he had unravelled the strange web of perplexity in which I still found myself involved.

"The day before yesterday," said he, "I informed the resurrectionists in the service of the university that I was in want of a subject, desiring them at the same time to set to work with all speed. That very night they returned, assuring me that they had fished up one which would answer to a hair, being both young and vigorous. In order to inform myself of the quality of what they brought me, I examined the body, when, to my indignation and grief, I found that they had disinterred my excellent friend, Mr. Frederick Stadt, who had been buried the same day."

"What!" said I, starting up from the bed, "did they disinter me?—the scoundrels!"

"You may well call them scoundrels," said the professor, "for preventing a gentleman from enjoying the pleasure of being buried alive. The deed was certainly most felonious; and if you are at all anxious, I shall have them reported to the Syndic, and tried for their impertinent interference. But to proceed. No sooner did I observe that they had fallen upon you, than I said: 'My good men, this will nêver do. You have brought me here my worthy friend, Mr. Stadt. I cannot feel it in my heart to anatomize him; so just carry him quietly back to his old quarters, and I shall pay you his price, and something over and above.'"

"What!" said I, again interrupting the doctor, "is it possible that you could be so inhuman as to make the scoundrels bury me again?"

"Now, Stadt," rejoined he, with a smile, "you are a strange fellow. You were angry at the men for raising you, and now you are angry at me for endeavoring to repair their error by reinterring you."

"But you forget that I was to come alive?"

"How the deuce was I to know that, my dear boy?"

"Very true. Go on, doctor, and excuse me for interrupting you so often."

"Well," continued he, "the men carried you last night to deposit you in your long home, when, as fate would have it, they were prevented by a ridiculous fellow of a tailor, who, for a trifling wager, had engaged to sit up alone, during the whole night, in the churchyard, exactly at the spot where your grave lay. So they brought you back to the college, resolving to inter you to-night, if the tailor, or the devil himself, should stand in their way. Your timely resuscitation will save them this trouble. At the same time, if you are still offended, they will be happy to take you back, and you may yet enjoy the felicity of being buried alive."

Such was a simple statement of the fact, delivered in

the professor's good-humored and satirical style; and from it the reader may guess what a narrow escape I had from the most dreadful of deaths. I returned to my own house as soon as possible, to the no small mortification of my cousin, who was proceeding to invest himself with all that belonged to me. I made him refund without ceremony, and altered my will, which had been made in his favor, not forgetting, in so doing, his refusal to let my body remain two days longer unburied. A day or two afterward, I saw a funeral pass by, which, on inquiry, I learned to be Wolstang's. He died suddenly, as I was informed, and some persons remarked it as a curious event that his death happened at precisely the same moment as my return to life. This was merely mentioned as a passing observation, but no inference was deduced from it. The old domestic in Wolstang's house gave a wonderful account of his death, mentioning the hour at which he said he was to die, and how it was verified by the event. She said nothing, however, about the hundred gilders. Many considered her story as a piece of mere trumpery. She had, nevertheless, a number of believers.

These events, which are here related at full, I can only attest by my own word, except, indeed, the affair of the coming alive, which everybody in Göttingen knows of. If any doubt the more unlikely parts of the detail, I cannot help it. I have not written this with the view of empty fame, and still less of profit. Philosophy has taught me to despise the former, and my income renders the latter an object of no importance. I shall conclude by acknowledging that a strong change has been wrought in my opinions; and that from ridiculing the doctrines of the sage of Samos, I am now one of their firmest supporters. In a word, I am what I have designated myself,

"A Modern Pythagorean."

THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER

The Devil and Tom Walker

Washington Irving

A FEW miles from Boston in Massachusetts there is a deep inlet, winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass.

On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size.

Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great treasure buried by Kidd, the pirate.

The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly and at night to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good lookout to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again.

The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meagre, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on, she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property.

They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone, and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveller stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field, where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passerby, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name, Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamor and clapperclawing, eyed the den of discord askance, and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighborhood, he took what he considered a short cut homeward, through the swamp. Like most

short cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveller into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bull frog, and the water snake; where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half-drowned, half-rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs; or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a firm piece of ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp.

It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the com-

mon people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars, when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking-staff into a mound of black mould at his feet.

Unconsciously turning up the soil, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mould, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice.

Tom lifted up his eyes, and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen any one approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-colored, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse, black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an axe on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom, with a sneer, "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be d——d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbors. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man, who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians.

He now looked around, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the axe. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who had made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild hunts-

man in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighborhood I am known by the name of the black woodsman. I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honor of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists; I am the great patron and prompter of slave dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are commonly called Old Scratch."

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half-civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage, in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife, that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money buried by Kidd, the pirate, under the oak trees on the high ridge not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions.

What these conditions were may be easily surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They

must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles when money was in view.

When they reached the edge of the swamp the stranger paused.

"What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom.

"There's my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home he found the black print of a finger, burnt, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish, that "A great man had fallen in Israel."

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom, "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject; but the

more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort towards the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she had met about twilight hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms; she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forebore to say.

The next evening she set off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance; morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came, but no wife. In a word she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an axe on his shoulder, was seen late that very

evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as it flew screaming by; or the bull frog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool.

At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot, and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamor of carrion crows hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron, hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy, for he recognized his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off screaming into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the checked apron, but, woful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it.

Such, according to this most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but, though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however, for

it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapper-clawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude toward the black woodman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old black-legs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for: he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodman's dress, with his axe on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with indifference, made brief replies and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to

say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused: he was bad enough in all conscience; but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent. a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchants to bankruptcy——"

"I'll drive them to the d——l," cried Tom Walker.

"You are the usurer for my money!" said black legs, with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker. So they shook hands and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a counting house in Boston.

Tom's reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the time of Governor Belcher, when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit The country had been deluged with government bills, the famous Land Bank had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements; for building cities in the wilderness; land

jobbers went about with maps of grants, and townships, and Eldorados, lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country, had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and adventurous; the gambling speculator; the dreaming land jobber; the thriftless tradesman; the merchant with cracked credit; in short, every one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices, hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy, and acted like a "friend in need;" that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages; gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer; and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand; he became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon 'Change. He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation; but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fulness of his vain glory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axle-trees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent church-goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week, by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward, were struck with self-reproach as seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religion as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists.

In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his counting-house desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that, fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new-shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed

that at the last day the world would be turned upside down: in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it.

One hot summer afternoon in the dog days, just as a terrible black thunder gust was coming up, Tom sat in his counting-house, in his white linen cap and India silk morning gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he professed the greatest friendship. The poor land jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day. "My family will be ruined and brought upon the parish," said the land jobber.

"Charity begins at home," replied Tom; "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety. "The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow, gruffly.

Tom shrank back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares.

The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse a lash, and away he galloped with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunder storm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and

stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets; his white cap bobbing up and down; his morning gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every pound.

When the clerks turned to look for the black man, he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thunder gust he heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over hills and down into the black hemlock swamp toward the old Indian fort; and that shortly after, a thunder bolt falling in that direction seemed to set the forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the devil, in all kinds of shapes, from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver, his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took fire and was burnt to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, whence he dug Kidd's

money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighboring swamp and the old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker."

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Alvey A. Adee

THERE was something about the wholesome sleepiness of Freiberg, in Saxony, that fitted well with the lazy nature of Ronald Wyde. So, having run down there to spend a day or two among the students and the mines, and taking a liking to the quaint, unmodernized town, he bodily changed his plans of autumn-travel, gave up a cherished scheme of Russian vagabondage, had his baggage sent from Dresden, and made ready to settle down and drowse away three or four months in idleness and not over-arduous study. And this move of his led to the happening of a very strange and seemingly unreal event in his life.

Ronald Wyde was then about twenty-five or six years old, rather above the medium height, with thick blue-black hair that he had an artist-trick of allowing to ripple down to his neck, dark hazel eyes that were almost too deeply recessed in their bony orbits, and a troublesome growth of beard that, close-shaven as he always was, showed in strong blue outline through the thin and rather sallow skin. His address was singularly pleasing, and his wide experience of life, taught him by years of varied travel, made him a good deal of a cosmopolitan in his views and ways, which caused him to be looked upon as a not over-safe companion for young men of his own age or under.

Having made up his mind to winter in Freiberg, his first step was to quit the little hotel, with its mouldy stone-vaulted entrance and its columned dining-room, under whose full-centered arches close beery and smoky fumes lingered persistently, and seek quieter student-lodgings in the heart of the town. His choice was mainly influenced by a thin-railed balcony, twined through and through by the shoots of a vigorous Virginia creeper, that flamed and flickered in the breezy October sunsets in strong relief against the curtains that drifted whitely out and in through the open window. So, with the steady-going and hale old Frau Spritzkrapfen he took up his quarters, fully persuading himself that he did so for the sake of the stray home-breaths that seemed to stir the scarlet vine-leaves more gently for him, and ignoring pretty Lottchen's great, earnest Saxon eyes as best he could.

A sunny morning followed his removal to Frau Spritzkrapfen's tidy home. There had been a slight rain in the early night, and the footways were yet bright and moist in patches that the slanting morning rays were slowly coaxing away. Ronald Wyde, having set his favorite books handily on the dimity-draped table, which comprised for him the process of getting to rights, and having given more than one glance of amused wonderment at the naive blue-and-white scriptural tiles that cased his cumbrous four-story earthenware stove, and smiled lazily at poor Adam's obvious and sudden indigestion, even while the uneaten half-apple remained in his guilty hand, he stepped out on his balcony, leaned his elbows among the crimson leaves, and took in the healthful morning air in great draughts. It was a Sunday; the bells of the gray minster hard by were iterating their clanging calls to the simple townsfolk to come and be droned to in sleepy German gutturals from the carved, pillar-hung pulpit

inside. Looking down, he saw thick-ankled women cluttering past in loose wooden-soled shoes, and dumpy girls with tow-braids primly dangling to their hips, convoying sturdy Dutch-built luggers of younger brothers up the easy slope that led to the church and the bells. Presently Frau Spritzkrapfen and dainty Lottchen, rosy with soap and health, slipped through the doorway beneath him out into the little church-bound throng, and, as they disappeared, left the house and street somehow unaccountably alone. Feeling this, Ronald Wyde determined on a stroll.

Something in the Sabbath stillness around him led Ronald away from the swift clang and throbbing hum of the bells and in the direction of the old cemetery. Passing through the clumsy tower-gate that lifts its grimy bulk sullenly, like a huge head-stone over the grave of a dead time of feudalism, he reached the burial-ground and entered the quiet enclosure. The usual touching reverence of the Germans for their dead was strikingly manifest around him. The humbler mounds, walled up with rough stones a foot or two above the pathway level, carried on their crests little gardens of gay and inexpensive plants; while on the tall wooden crosses at their head hung yellow wreaths, half hiding the hopeful legend, "Wiedersehen." The more pretentious slabs bore vases filled with fresh flowers; while in the grate-barred vaults, that skirted the ground like the arches of a cloister, lay rusty heaps of long-since mouldered bloom, topped by newer wreaths tossed lovingly in to wilt and turn to dust in their turn, like those cast in before them in memory of that other dust asleep below.

Turning aside from the central walk that halved the cemetery, Ronald strolled along, his hands in his pockets, his eyes listlessly fixed on the orange-colored fumes and rolling smoke that welled out of tall chim-

neys in the hollow beyond, an idle student-tune humming on his lips, and his thoughts nowhere, and everywhere, at once. Happening to look away from the dun smoke-trail for an instant, he found something of greater interest close at hand. An old man stooped stiffly over a simple mound, busied among the flowers that hid it, and by his side crouched a young girl, perhaps fourteen years old, who peered up at Ronald with questioning, velvet-brown eyes. The old man heard the intruder's steps crunching in the damp gravel, and slowly looked up too.

"Good morning, mein Herr," said Ronald, pleasantly.

The old man remained for an instant blinking nervously, and shading his eyes from the full sunlight that fell on his face. A quiet face it was, and very old, seamed and creased by mazy wrinkles that played at aimless cross-purposes with each other, beginning and ending nowhere. His thick beard and thin, curved nose looked just a little Jewish, and seemed at variance with his pale blue eyes that were still bright in spite of age. And yet, bearded as he was, there was a lurking expression about his features that bordered upon effeminacy, and made the treble of his voice sound even more thin and womanish as he answered Wyde's greeting.

"Good morning, too, mein Herr. A stranger to our town, I see."

"Yes; but soon not to be called one, I hope. I am here for the winter."

"A cold season—a cold season; our northern winters are very chilling to an old man's blood." And slouching together into a tired stoop, he resumed his simple task of knotting a few flowers into a clumsy nosegay. Ronald stood and watched him with a vague interest. Presently, the flowers being clumped to his liking, the old man pried himself upright by getting a good pur-

chase with his left hand in the small of his back, and so deliberately that Ronald almost fancied he heard him creak. The girl rose too, and drew her thin shawl over her shoulders.

"You Germans love longer than we," said Ronald, glancing at the flowers that trembled in the old man's bony fingers, and then downwards to the quiet grave; "a lifetime of easy-going love and a year or two of easier-forgetting are enough for us."

"Should I forget my own flesh and blood?" asked the old man, simply.

Ronald paused a moment, and, pointing downwards, said:

"Your daughter, then, I fancy?"

"Yes."

"Long dead?"

"Very long; more than fifty years."

Ronald started, but said nothing audibly. Inwardly he whispered something about being devilish glad to make the wandering Jew's acquaintance, rattled the loose gröschen in his pocket, and turned to follow the tottering old man and firm-footed child down the walk. After a dozen paces they halted before a more ambitious tombstone, on which Ronald could make out the well-remembered name of Plattner. The child took the flowers and laid them reverently on the stone.

"It seems to me almost like arriving at the end of a pilgrimage," said Ronald, "when I stand by the grave of a man of science. Perhaps you knew him, mein Herr?"

"He was my pupil."

"Whew!" thought Ronald, "that makes my friend here a centenarian at least."

"My pupil and friend," the feeble voice went on; "and, more than that, my daughter's first lover, and only one."

"Ach so!" drawled Ronald.

"And now, on her death-day, I take these poor flowers from her to him, as I have done all these years."

Something in the pathetic earnestness of his companion touched Ronald Wyde, and he forthwith took his hands out of his pockets, and didn't try to whistle inaudibly—which was a great deal for him to do.

"I know Plattner well by his works," he said; "I once studied mineralogy for nearly a month."

"You love science, then?"

"Yes; like everything else, for diversion."

"It was different with him," quavered the old man, pointing unsteadily to the head-stone. "Science grew to be his one passion, and many discoveries rewarded him for his devotion. He was groping on the track of a far greater achievement when he died."

"May I ask what it was?" said Ronald, now fairly interested.

"The creation and isolation of the principle of Life!"

This was too much for Ronald Wyde; down dived his restless hands into his trousers' pockets again, and the gröschen rattled as merrily as before.

"I have made quite a study of biology, and all that sort of thing," said he; "and, although a good deal of a skeptic, and inclined to follow Huxley, I can't bring myself to conceive of life without organism. Such theorizing is, to my mind, on a par with the illogical search for the philosopher's stone and a perpetual motor."

The old man's eyes sparkled as he turned full upon Ronald.

"You dismiss the subject very airily, my young friend," he cried; "but let me tell you that I—I, whom you see here—have grappled with such problems through a weary century, and have conquered one of them."

"And that one is—"

"The one that conquered Plattner!"

"Do I understand you to claim that you have discovered the life-principle?"

"Yes."

"Will you permit an utter stranger to inquire what is its nature?"

"Certainly. It is twofold. The ultimate principle of life is carbon; the cause of its combination with water, or rather with the two gaseous elements of water, and the development of organized existence therefrom, is electricity."

Ronald Wyde shrugged his broad shoulders a little, and absently replied,

"All I can say, mein Herr, is, that you've got the bulge on me."

"I beg your pardon—"

"Excuse me; I unconsciously translated an Americanism. I mean that I don't quite understand you."

"Which means that you do not believe me. It is but natural at your age, when one doubts as if by instinct. Would you be convinced?"

"Nothing would please me better."

With the same painful effort as before, the old man straightened himself and made a piercing clairvoyant examination into and through Ronald Wyde's eyes, as if reading the brain beyond them.

"I think I can trust you," he mumbled at last. "Come with me."

Leaning on the young girl's arm, the old philosopher faltered through the cemetery and into the town, followed by Wyde, his hands again pocketed for safety. Groups of released church-goers, sermon-fed, met them, and once in a while some stout burgher would nod patronizingly to Ronald's guides, and get in response a shaky, sidelong roll of the old man's head, as if it

were mounted on a weak spiral spring. Further on they intersected a knot of students, who eyed them askance and exchanged remarks in an undertone. Keeping on deeper into the foul heart of the town, they passed through swarms of idle children playing sportlessly, as poverty is apt to play, in the dark shadows of the narrow street They seemed incited to mirth and ribaldry by the sight of Ronald's new friend, and one even ventured to hurl a clod at him; but this striking Ronald instead, and he facing promptly to the hostile quarter from whence it came, caused a sudden slinking of the crowd into unknown holes, like a horde of rats, and the street was for a time empty save for the little party that threaded it. Ronald began to think that the old man's sanity was gravely called in doubt by the townsfolk, and would readily have backed out of his adventure but for the curiosity that had now got the upper hand of him.

Presently the old man sidled into a dingy doorway, like a tired beast run to earth, and Ronald followed him, not without a wish that the architect had provided for a more efficient lighting of the sombre passage-way in which he found himself. A sharp turn to the right after a dozen groping-paces, a narrow stairway, a bump or two against unexpected saliences of rough mortared wall, two steps upward and one very surprising step downward through a cavernous doorway that took away Ronald's breath for a moment, and sent it back again with a hot, creeping wave of sudden perspiration all over him, as is the way with missteps, and two more sharp turns, brought the three into a black no-thoroughfare of a hall, whose further end was closed by a locked door. The girl here rubbed a brimstone abomination of a match into a mal-odorous green glow, and by its help the old man got a tortuous key into the snaky opening in the great lock, creakily shot back its

bolt, swung open the door, and motioned Ronald to enter.

He found himself in a long and rather narrow room, with a high ceiling, duskily lighted by three wide windows that were thickly webbed and dusted, like ancestral bottles of fine crusty Port. A veritable den it was, filled with what seemed to be the wrecks of philosophical apparatus dating back two or three generations—ill-fated ventures on the treacherous main of science. Here a fat-bellied alembic lolled lazily over in a gleamy sand-bath, like a beach-lost galleon at ebb-tide; and there a heap of broken porcelain-tubing and shreds of crucibles lay like bleaching ship-ribs on a sullen shore. Beyond, by the middle window, stood a furnace, fireless, and clogged with gray ashes. Two or three solid old-time tables, built when joiners were more lavish of oaken timber than now-a-days, stood hopelessly littered with retorts, filtering funnels, lamps, ringstands, and squat-beakers of delicate glass, caked with long-dried sediment, all alike dust-smirched. Ronald involuntarily sought for some huge Chaldaic tome, conveniently open at a favorite spell, or a handy crocodile or two dangling from the square beams overhead, but saw nothing more formidable than a stray volume of "Kant's Critique of Pure Reason." Taking this up and glancing at its fly-leaf, he saw a name written in spidery German script, almost illegible from its shakiness—"Max Lebensfunke."

"Your name?" he asked.

"Yes, mein Herr," answered the old man, taking the volume and caressing it like a live thing in his fumbling hands. "This book was given to me by the great Kant himself," he added.

Reverently replacing it, he advanced a few steps toward the middle of the room. Ronald followed, and, turning away from the windows, looked further around

him. In striking contrast to the undisturbed disorder, so redolent of middle-age alchemy, was the big table that flanked the laboratory through its whole length. It began with a powerful galvanic battery, succeeded by a wiry labyrinth of coils and helices, with little keys in front of them like a telegraph office retired from business; these gave place to many-necked jars wired together by twos and threes, like oath-bound patriots plotting treason; beyond them stood a great glass globe, connected with a sizable air-pump, and filled with a complexity of shiny wires and glassware; next loomed up a huge induction-magnet, carefully insulated on solid glass supports; and at the further extremity of the table lay—a corpse.

Ronald Wyde, in spite of his many-sided experience of dissection-rooms, and morgues, and other ghastlinesses to which he had long since accustomed himself from principle, drew back at the sight—perhaps because he had come to this strange place to clutch the world-old mystery of the life-essence, and found himself, instead, confronted on its threshold by the equal mystery of death.

Herr Lebensfunke smiled feebly at this movement.

"A subject received this morning from Berlin," he said, in answer to Wyde's look of inquiry. "A sad piece of extravagance, mein Herr—a luxury to which I can rarely afford to treat myself."

Ronald Wyde bent over the body and looked into its face. A rough, red face, that had seemingly seen forty years of low-lived dissipation. The blotched skin and bleary eyes told of debauchery and drunkenness, and a slight alcoholic fœtidness was unpleasantly perceptible, as from the breath of one who sleeps away the effects of a carouse.

"I hope you don't think of restoring this soaked specimen to life?" said Ronald.

"That is still beyond me," answered the old man, mournfully. "As yet I have not created life of a higher grade than that of the lowest zoöphytes."

"Do you claim to have done as much as that?"

"It is not an idle claim," said Herr Lebensfunke, solemnly. "Look at this, if you doubt."

"This" was the crystal globe that rose from the middle of the long table, and dominated its lesser accessories, as some great dome swells above the clustered houses of a town. Tubes passing through its walls met in a smaller central globe half filled with a colorless liquid. Beneath this, and half encircling it, was an intricate maze of bright wire; and two other wires dipped into it, touching the surface of the liquid with their platinum tips. Within the liquid pulsed a shapeless mass of almost transparent spongy tissue.

"You see an aggregation of cells possessed of life—of a low order, it is true, but none the less life," said the philosopher, proudly. "These were created from water chemically pure, with the exception of a trace of ammonia, and impregnated with liquid carbon, by the combined action of heat and induced electricity, in vacuo. Look!"

He pressed one of the keys before him. Presently the wire began to glow with a faint light, which increased in intensity till the coil flamed into pure whiteness. Removing his finger, the current ceased to flow, and the wire grew rapidly cool.

"I passed the whole strength of sixty cups through it to show you its action. Ordinarily, with one or two carbon cells, and refining the current by triple induction, the temperature is barely blood-warm."

"Pardon an interruption," said Ronald. "You spoke of liquid carbon; does it exist?"

"Yes; here is some in this phial. See it—how pure, how transparent! how it loves and hoards the light!"

The old man held the phial up as he spoke, and turned it round and round. "See how it flashes! No wonder, for it is the diamond, liquid and uncrystallized. Think how these fools of men have called diamonds precious above all gems through these many weary years, and showered them on their kings, or tossed them to their mistresses' feet, never dreaming that the silly stone they lauded was inert, crystallized life!"

"Can't you crystallize diamonds yourself?" asked Wyde, "and make Frieberg a Golconda and yourself a Croesus?"

"It could be done, after the lapse of thousands of years," replied Herr Lebensfunke. "Place undiluted liquid carbon in that inner globe, keep the coil at a white heat, and if Adam had started the process, his heir-at-law would have a Koh-i-noor to-day, and a nice lawsuit for its possession.

Ronald Wyde bent toward the globe once more and examined the throbbing mass closely, whistling softly meanwhile.

"If you can create this cellular life, why not develop it still higher into an organism?"

"Because I can only create life—not soul. Years ago I was a freethinker, now my discoveries have made me a deist; for I found that my cells, living as they were, and possesing undoubted parietal circulation, were not germs; and though they might cluster into a bulb like this, as bubbles do to form froth, to evolve an animal or plant from them was far beyond me; that needs what we call soul. But, in searching blindly for this higher power, I grasped a greater discovery than any I had hoped for—the power to isolate life from its bodily organism."

"You have to keep the bottle carefully corked, I should imagine," laughed Ronald.

"Not quite," said Herr Lebensfunke, joining in the

laugh. "Life is not glue. My grand discovery is the life-magnet."

"Which has the post of honor on your table here, has it not?" inquired Ronald, drawing his hand from his pocket and pointing to the insulated coil.

The old man glanced keenly at his hand as he did so; at which Ronald seemed confused, and pocketed it again abruptly.

"Yes, that is the life-magnet. You see this bent glass tube surrounded by the helix? That tube contains liquid carbon. I pass through the helix a current of induced electricity, generated by the action of these sixty Bunsen cups upon a succession of coils with carbon cores, and the magnet becomes charged with soulless life. I reverse the stream—what was positive now is negative, and the same magnet will absorb life from a living being to an extent only to be measured by thousands of millions."

"Then, what effect is produced on the body you pump the life from?"

"Death."

"And what becomes of the soul?"

"I don't quite know. I fancy, however, that the magnet absorbs that too."

"Can it give it back?"

"Certainly; otherwise my life-magnet would belie its name, and be simply an ingenious and expensive instrument of death. By reversing the conditions, I can restore both soul and life to the body from which I drew them, or to another body, even after the lapse of several days."

"Have you ever done so?"

"I have."

Ronald looked reflectively downward to his boot-toe, but seemed to find nothing there—except a boot-toe.

"I say, my friend," he spoke at last, "haven't you got

a pin you can stick in me? I'd like to know if I'm dreaming."

"I can convince you better than by pins," replied Herr Lebensfunke. "Let me see that hand you hide so carefully."

Ronald Wyde slowly drew it from his pocket, as reluctantly as though it were a begrudged charity dole, and extended it to the old man. Its little finger was gone.

"A defect that I am foolishly sensitive about," said he. "A childish freak—playing with edged tools, you know. A boy playmate chopped it off by accident; I cut his head open with his own hatchet, and made an idiot of him for life—that's all."

"I could do this," said Herr Lebensfunke, pausing on each word as if it were somewhat heavy, and had to be lifted out of his cramped chest by force; "I could draw your entity into that magnet, leaving you side by side with this corpse. I could dissect a finger from that same corpse, attach it to your own dead hand by a little of that palpitating life-mass you have seen, pass an electric stream through it, and a junction would be effected in three or four days. I could then restore you to existence, whole, and not maimed as now."

"I don't quite like the idea of dying, even for a day," answered Wyde. "Couldn't you contrive to lend me a body while you are mending my own?"

"You can take that one, if you like."

Ronald Wyde looked once more at the sodden features of the corpse, and smiled lugubriously.

"A mighty shabby old customer," he said, "and I doubt if I could feel at home in his skin; but I'm willing to risk it for the sake of the novelty of the thing."

The old philosopher's thin face lit up with pleasure.

"You consent then?" he chuckled in his womanish treble.

"Of course I do. Begin at once, and have done with it."

"Not now, mein Herr; some modifications must be made in the connections—mere matters of detail. Come again to-night."

"At what hour?"

"At ten. Mein Vögelein, show the Herr the way out."

The girl, who had been moving restlessly about the room all this time, with her wild brown eyes fixed now on Ronald, now on the old man, and oftener in a shy, inquisitive stare on the corpse, lit a dusty chemical lamp and led the way down the awkward passages and stairs. Ronald tried to start a conversation with her as he followed. "You are too young, my birdling, to be accustomed to such sights as this upstairs."

"Birdling is not too young; she's almost fourteen." said the girl, proudly. "And she likes it, too; it makes her think of mother. Mother went to sleep on that table, mein Herr."

"Poor thing! she's half-witted," thought Wyde as he passed into the street. "By-by, birdie."

Home he walked briskly, to be met under his flaming balcony by Lottchen's kindly afternoon greeting. How had mein Herr passed his Sabbath? she asked.

"Quietly enough, Lottchen. I met an old philosopher in the God's-Acre, and went home with him to his shop. Have you ever heard of Herr Doctor Lebensfunke?"

"Yes, mein Herr. Wrong here, they say;" and she tapped her wide, round German forehead, and lifted her eyes expressively heavenward.

"Sold himself to the devil, eh?" asked Wyde.

Lottchen was not quite sure on that point. Some said one thing, and some another. There was undoubtedly a devil, else how could good Doctor Luther

have thrown his inkstand at him? But he had never been seen in Doctor Lebensfunke's neighborhood; and, on the whole, Lottchen was inclined to attribute the Herr Doctor's trouble to an indefinable something whose nature was broadly hinted at by more tapping of the forehead.

Ronald Wyde mounted the stairs, locked himself in his room, and wished himself out of the scrape he was getting into. But, being in for it now, he lit a cigar, and tried to fancy the processes he would have to go through, and how he, a natty and respectable young fellow, would look and feel in a drunkard's skin. His conjectures being too foggily outlined to please him, he put them aside, and waited impatiently enough for ten o'clock.

A moonlight walk through the low streets, transfigured by the silver gleam into fairy vistas—all but the odor—brought him to Herr Lebensfunke's house. Simple birdling, on the lookout for him, piloted him through the unsafe channel, and brought him to anchor in the dimly-lit room.

"All is ready," said the philosopher, as he trembled forward and shook Ronald's hand. "See here." Zigzags of silk-bound wire squirmed hither and thither from the life-magnet. Two of them ended in carbon points. "And here, too, my young friend, is your new finger."

It lay, detached, in the central globe, and on its severed end atoms of protoplasm were already clustered. "Literally a second-hand article," thought Ronald; but, not venturing to translate the idiom, he only bowed and said, "Ach so!" which means any thing and every thing in German.

It was not without a very natural sinking of the heart that Ronald Wyde divested himself of his clothing, and took his position, by the old man's direction,

on the stout table, side by side with the dead. A flat brass plate pressed between his shoulders, and one of the carbon points, clamped in a little insulated stand, rested on his bosom and quivered with the quickened motion of the heart beneath it. The other point touched the dead man's breast.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

The old man pressed a key, and as he did so a sharp sting, hardly worse than a leech's bite, pricked Ronald Wyde's breast. A sense of languor crept slowly upon him, his feet tingled, his breath came slowly, and waves of light and shade pulsed in indistinct alternation before his sight; but through them the old man's eyes peered into his, like a dream. Presently Ronald would have started if he could, for two old philosophers were craning over him instead of one. But as he looked more steadily, one face softly dimmed into nothing, and the other grew brighter and stronger in its lines, while the room flushed with an unaccountable light. The little key clicked once more; a vague sensation that the current had somehow ceased to flow, roused him, and he raised himself on his elbow and looked in blank bewilderment at his own dead self lying by his side in the daylight, while the sunrise tried to peer through the webbed panes.

"Is it over?" he asked, with a puzzled glance around him; and added, "Which am I?"

"Either, or both," answered Herr Lebensfunke. "Your identity will be something of a problem to you for a day or two."

Aided by the old man, Ronald awkwardly got into the sleazy clothes that went with the exchange—growing less and less at home each minute. He felt weak and sore; his head ached, and the wound left by the fresh amputation of his little finger throbbed angrily.

"I suppose I may as well go now," he said. "When can I get my own self there back again?"

"On Thursday night, if all works well," said the old man. "Till then, good-day."

Ronald Wyde's first impulse, as he shambled into the open air, was to go home; but he thought of the confusion his sadly-mixed identity would cause in Frau Spritzkrapfen's quiet household, and came to a dead stop to consider the matter. Then he decided to quit the town for the interminable four days—to go to Dresden, or anywhere. His next step was to slouch into the nearest beer-cellar and call for beer, pen, and paper. While waiting for these, he surveyed his own reflection in the dingy glass that hung above the table he sat by—a glass that gave his face a wavy look, as if seen through heated air. He felt an amused pride in his altered appearance, much as a masquerader might be pleased with a clever disguise, and caught himself wondering whether he were likely to be recognized in it. Apparently satisfied of his safety from detection, he turned to the table and wrote a beer-scented note to Frau Spritzkrapfen, explaining his sudden absence by some discreet fiction. He got along well enough till he reached the end, when, instead of his own flowing sign-manual, he tipsily scrawled the unfamiliar name of Hans Kraut. Tearing the sheet angrily across, he wrote another, and signed his name with an effort. He was about to seek a messenger to carry his note, when it occurred to him to leave it himself, which he did; and had thereby the keen satisfaction of hearing pretty Lottchen confess, with a blush on her fair German cheek, that they would all miss Herr Wyde very much, because they all loved him. Turning away with a sigh that was very like a hiccough, he trudged to the railway station and took a ticket to Dresden, going third-class as best befitting his clothes and appearance.

He felt ashamed enough of himself as the train rumbled over the rolling land between Freiberg and the capital, and gave him time to think connectedly over what had happened, and what he now was. His fellow-passengers cast him sidelong looks, and gave him a wide berth. Even the quaint, flat-arched windows of one pane each, that winked out of the red-tiled roofs like sleepy eyes, seemed to leer drunkenly at him as they scudded by.

Ronald Wyde's account of those days in Dresden was vague and misty. He crept along the bustling streets of that sombre, gray city, that seemed to look more natural by cloud-light than in the full sunshine, feeling continually within him a struggle between the two incompatible natures now so strangely blended. Each day he kept up the contest manfully, passing by the countless beer-cellars and drinking-booths with an assumption of firmness and resolution that oozed slowly away toward nightfall, when the animal body of the late Hans Kraut would contrive to get the better of the animated principle of Ronald Wyde; the refined nature would yield to the toper's brute-craving, with an awful sense of its deep degradation in so succumbing, and, before midnight, Hans was gloriously drunk, to Ronald's intense grief.

Time passed somehow. He had memories of sunny lounges on the Bruhl'sche Terrace, looking on the turbid flow of the eddied Elbe, and watching the little steamboats that buzzed up and down the city's flanks, settling now and then, like gad-flies, to drain it of a few drops of its human life. Well-known friends, whose hands he had grasped not a week before, passed him unheedingly; all save one, who eyed him for a moment, said "Poor devil!" in an undertone, and dropped a silber-gro' into his maimed hand. He felt glad of even this lame sympathy in his lowness; but most of all he

prized the moistened glance of pity that flashed upon him from the great dark eyes of a lovely girl who passed him now and then as he slouched along. Once a being as degraded and scurvy as his own outward self, turned to him, called him "Dutzbruder," asked him how he left them all in Berlin, stared at Ronald's blank look of non-recognition, and passed on with a muttered curse on his own stupidity in mistaking a stranger, in broad daylight, for his crony Kraut.

Another memory was of the strange lassitude that seemed to almost paralyze him after even moderate exertion, and caused him to drop exhausted on a bench on the terrace when he had shuffled over less than half its length. More than once the suspicion crept upon him that only a portion of his vitality now remained to him, and that its greater part lay mysteriously coiled in Herr Lebensfunke's life-magnet. And this, in turn, broadened into a doubting distrust of the Herr himself—a dread lest the old man might in some way appropriate this stock of life to his own use, and so renew his fast-expiring lease for a score or two of years to come. At last this dread grew so painfully definite, that he hurried back to Freiberg a day before his appointed time, and once more found his twofold self wandering through its devious streets.

It was long after dark, and a thin rain slanted on the slippery stones, as he again made his way through the deserted and sleepy paths of the town to the old philosopher's house. He was wet, chilled, weary, and sick enough at heart as he leaned against the cold stone doorway and waited for an answer to his knock. The plash of the heavier rain-drops from the tiled leaves was the only sound he heard for many minutes, until, at last, pattering feet neared him on the inside, and a child's voice asked who was there. To his friendly

response the door was opened half-wide, and Vögelein's blank, pretty face peered through.

Was Herr Lebensfunke at home? No; he had said that he wasn't at home; but then, she thought he was in the long room where mamma went to sleep. Could he be seen? No, she thought not; he was very tired, and, in her own—Vögelein's—opinion, he was going to sleep too, just as mamma did. And the wizened little face, with its eldritch eyes and tangled hair, was withdrawn, and the door began to close. Ronald forced himself inside, and grasped the child's arm.

"Vögelein, don't you know me?"

The girl, in nowise startled, gravely set her flickering candle on the door-step, looked up at him wonderingly, as if he were an exhibition, and said she thought not, unless he had been asleep on the table.

"Good heavens!" cried Ronald, "can this child talk of nothing but people asleep on a table?"

But, as he spoke, a thought whirred through his brain. He drew the poor half-witted thing close to him and asked:

"Can Vögelein tell me something about mamma, and how she went to sleep?"

The child rambled on, pleased to find a listener to her foolish prattle. All he could connect into a narrative was, that the girl's mother, some seven or eight years before, had been drained of her life by the awful magnet, and that, as the child said, "the Herr Doctor ever since had talked just like mamma."

His dread was well founded, then. The old man's one dream and aim was to prolong his wretched life; could he doubt that he would not now make use of the means he had so unwisely thrown in his way? He turned about, half maddened.

"Girl!" he cried, "I must see the old man! Where is he?"

He couldn't see him, she whined. He was asleep up there, on the table. At one o'clock he had said he would wake up.

He pushed past her, mounted to the long room, pressed open the unfastened door, and entered.

The old man and the corpse of his former self lay together under the light of a lamp that swung from the beam overhead. An insulated carbon point was directed to each white, still breast. From the old man's hand a cord ran to a key beyond, arranged to make or break connection at a touch. By it stood a clock, with a simple mechanism attached that bore upon a second key like the first, evidently planned to press upon it when the hands should mark a given hour. The child had said that he would wake at one, and it was now past midnight.

Ronald Wyde comprehended it all now. The wily old man's feeble life had been withdrawn into the great magnet, and mixed therein with what remained of his own. In less than an hour the key would fall, and the double stream would flow into and animate his young body, which would then wake to renewed life; while the cast-off shell beside it, worn to utter uselessness by a toilsome century, would be left to moulder as a mothed garment.

Surely no time was to be lost; his life depended upon instant action. And yet, comprehending this, he went to work slowly, and as a somnambulist might, acting almost by instinct, and well knowing that a blunder now meant irrevocable death.

Carefully disengaging the cord from the old man's yet warm grasp, and setting the carbon point aside, he lifted the shrivelled corpse and bore it away, to cast it on the white rubbish-heap in one corner. Returning to his work, he stripped himself, and laid down in the

old man's place. As he did so, the distant Minster bells rang the three-quarters.

Was there yet time?

He braced his shoulders firmly against the brass plate under them, and moved the carbon point steadily back to its place, with its tip resting on his breast; the silk-wrapped wire that dangled between it and the magnet quivering, as he did so, as with conscious life. Drawing a long breath, he tightened the cord, and heard a faint click as the key snapped down.

The same sharp sting as before instantly pricked his breast, tingling thrills pulsed over him, beats of light and shadow swept before his eyes, and he lost all consciousness. For how long he knew not. At last he felt, rather than saw, the lamp-rays flickering above him, and opened his eyes as though waking from a tired sleep. Sitting up, he gave a fearful look around him, as if dreading what he might see. The drunkard's body lay stretched and motionless beside him, and the clock marked three. He was saved!

Slipping down from his perilous bed, he resumed the old familiar garments that belonged to him as Ronald Wyde, shuddering with emotion as he did so. Only pausing to give one look at the pale heap in the shadowy corner, and at the other sleeper under the now dying lamp, he quitted the room and locked its heavy door upon the two silent guardians of its life-secrets. When he reached the street, he found the rain had ceased to drop, and that the cold stars blinked over the slumbrous town.

Before noon he had taken leave of Frau Spritzkrapfen, turned buxom Lottchen scarlet all over by a hearty, sudden, farewell-kiss, and was far on his way from Freiberg, with its red-vined balcony and its dark laboratory, never again to visit it or them. And as the

busy engine toiled and shrieked, and with each beat of its mighty steam-heart carried him further away, his thoughts flew back and clustered around witless, brown-eyed Birdling. Poor child, he never learned her fate.

* * * * *

I heard this strange story from its hero, one sunny summer morning as we swept over the meadowy reaches of the Erie Railway, or hung along the cliffside by the wooded windings of the Susquehanna. When he had ended it, he smiled languidly, and, showing me his still mutilated hand, said that the old doctor's job had been a sad bungle, after all. In fact, the only physical proof that remained to verify his story, was a curved blue spot where the in-going current from the magnet had carried particles from the carbon point and lodged them beneath the skin. Psychologically, he was sadly mixed up, he said; for, since that time, he had felt that four lives were joined in him—his own, the remnant of Herr Lebensfunke's miserable hoard merged in that of poor Birdling's mother, and, last of all,, Hans Kraut's. He left the cars soon afterward at Binghamton, watchfully followed by a stout, shabby man with a three days' beard stubbling his chin, who had occupied the seat in front of us, and had turned now and then to listen for a moment to Ronald's rapid narration.

A week later, and I heard that he was dead—having committed suicide in a fit of delirium soon after his admission to the Binghamton Inebriate Asylum. The attendant who made him ready for burial noticed a singular blue mark on his left breast, that looked, he said, a little like a horseshoe magnet.

WHAT WAS IT?

WHAT WAS IT?

Fitz James O'Brien

IT is, I confess, with considerable diffidence that I approach the strange narrative which I am about to relate. The events which I purpose detailing are of so extraordinary a character that I am quite prepared to meet with an unusual amount of incredulity and scorn. I accept all such beforehand. I have, I trust, the literary courage to face unbelief. I have, after mature consideration, resolved to narrate, in as simple and straightforward a manner as I can compass, some facts that passed under my observation, in the month of July last, and which, in the annals of the mysteries of physical science, are wholly unparalleled.

I live at No. — Twenty-sixth Street, in New York. The house is in some respects a curious one. It has enjoyed for the last two years the reputation of being haunted. It is a large and stately residence, surrounded by what was once a garden, but which is now only a green enclosure used for bleaching clothes. The dry basin of what has been a fountain, and a few fruit trees ragged and unpruned, indicate that this spot in past days was a pleasant, shady retreat, filled with fruits and flowers and the sweet murmur of waters.

The house is very spacious. A hall of noble size leads to a large spiral staircase winding through its center, while the various apartments are of imposing

dimensions. It was built some fifteen or twenty years since by Mr. A——, the well-known New York merchant, who five years ago threw the commercial world into convulsions by a stupendous bank fraud. Mr. A——, as everyone knows, escaped to Europe, and died not long after, of a broken heart. Almost immediately after the news of his decease reached this country and was verified, the report spread in Twenty-sixth Street that No. — was haunted. Legal measures had dispossessed the widow of its former owner, and it was inhabited merely by a caretaker and his wife, placed there by the house agent into whose hands it had passed for purposes of renting or sale. These people declared that they were troubled with unnatural noises. Doors were opened without any visible agency. The remnants of furniture scattered through the various rooms were, during the night, piled one upon the other by unknown hands. Invisible feet passed up and down the stairs in broad daylight, accompanied by the rustle of unseen silk dresses, and the gliding of viewless hands along the massive balusters. The caretaker and his wife declared they would live there no longer. The house agent laughed, dismissed them, and put others in their place. The noises and supernatural manifestations continued. The neighborhood caught up the story, and the house remained untenanted for three years. Several persons negotiated for it; but, somehow, always before the bargain was closed they heard the unpleasant rumors and declined to treat any further.

It was in this state of things that my landlady, who at that time kept a boarding-house in Bleecker Street, and who wished to move further up town, conceived the bold idea of renting No. — Twenty-sixth Street. Happening to have in her house rather a plucky and philosophical set of boarders, she laid her scheme before us, stating candidly everything she had heard respecting

the ghostly qualities of the establishment to which she wished to remove us. With the exception of two timid persons—a sea-captain and a returned Californian, who immediately gave notice that they would leave—all of Mrs. Moffat's guests declared that they would accompany her in her chivalric incursion into the abode of spirits.

Our removal was effected in the month of May, and we were charmed with our new residence. The portion of Twenty-sixth Street where our house is situated, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, is one of the pleasantest localities in New York. The gardens back of the houses, running down nearly to the Hudson, form, in the summer time, a perfect avenue of verdure. The air is pure and invigorating, sweeping, as it does, straight across the river from the Weehawken heights, and even the ragged garden which surrounded the house, although displaying on washing days rather too much clothes-line, still gave us a piece of greensward to look at, and a cool retreat in the summer evenings, where we smoked our cigars in the dusk, and watched the fire-flies flashing their dark-lanterns in the long grass.

Of course we had no sooner established ourselves at No. — than we began to expect the ghosts. We absolutely awaited their advent with eagerness. Our dinner conversation was supernatural. One of the boarders, who had purchased Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature" for his own private delectation, was regarded as a public enemy by the entire household for not having bought twenty copies. The man led a life of supreme wretchedness while he was reading this volume. A system of espionage was established, of which he was the victim. If he incautiously laid the book down for an instant and left the room, it was immediately seized and read aloud in secret places to a select few. I found my-

self a person of immense importance, it having leaked out that I was tolerably well versed in the history of supernaturalism, and had once written a story the foundation of which was a ghost. If a table or a wainscot panel happened to warp when we were assembled in the large drawing room, there was an instant silence, and everyone was prepared for an immediate clanking of chains and a spectral form.

After a month of psychological excitement, it was with the utmost dissatisfaction that we were forced to acknowledge that nothing in the remotest degree approaching the supernatural had manifested itself. Once the black butler asseverated that his candle had been blown out by some invisible agency while he was undressing himself for the night; but as I had more than once discovered this colored gentleman in a condition when one candle must have appeared to him like two, I thought it possible that, by going a step further in his potations, he might have reversed this phenomenon, and seen no candle at all where he ought to have beheld one.

Things were in this state when an incident took place so awful and inexplicable in its character that my reason fairly reels at the bare memory of the occurrence. It was the tenth of July. After dinner was over I repaired, with my friend Dr. Hammond, to the garden to smoke my evening pipe. Independent of certain mental sympathies which existed between the doctor and myself, we were linked together by a vice. We both smoked opium. We knew each other's secret, and respected it. We enjoyed together that wonderful expansion of thought, that marvelous intensifying of the perceptive faculties, that boundless feeling of existence when we seem to have points of contact with the whole universe—in short, that unimaginable spiritual bliss,

which I would not surrender for a throne, and which I hope you, reader, will never—never taste.

Those hours of opium happiness which the Doctor and I spent together in secret were regulated with a scientific accuracy. We did not blindly smoke the drug of paradise, and leave our dreams to chance. While smoking, we carefully steered our conversation through the brightest and calmest channels of thought. We talked of the East, and endeavored to recall the magical panorama of its glowing scenery. We criticized the most sensuous poets—those who painted life ruddy with health, brimming with passion, happy in the possession of youth and strength and beauty. If we talked of Shakespeare's tempest, we lingered over Ariel, and avoided Caliban. Like the Guebers, we turned our faces to the east, and saw only the sunny side of the world.

This skillful coloring of our train of thought produced in our subsequent visions a corresponding tone. The splendors of Arabian fairy-land dyed our dreams. We paced that narrow strip of grass with the tread and port of kings. The song of the rana arborea, while he clung to the bark of the ragged plum-tree, sounded like the strains of divine musicians. Houses, walls and streets melted like rain-clouds, and vistas of unimaginable glory stretched away before us. It was a rapturous companionship. We enjoyed the vast delight more perfectly because, even in our most ecstatic moments, we were conscious of each other's presence. Our pleasures, while individual, were still twin, vibrating and moving in musical accord.

On the evening in question, the tenth of July, the Doctor and myself drifted into an unusually metaphysical mood. We lit our large meerchaums, filled with fine Turkish tobacco, in the core of which burned a little black nut of opium, that, like the nut in the fairy

tale, held within its narrow limits wonders beyond the reach of kings; we paced to and fro, conversing. A strange perversity dominated the currents of our thought. They would not flow through the sun-lit channels into which we strove to divert them. For some unaccountable reason, they constantly diverged into dark and lonesome beds, where a continual gloom brooded. It was in vain that, after our old fashion, we flung ourselves on the shores of the East, and talked of its gay bazaars, of the splendors of the time of Haroun, of harems and golden palaces. Black afreets continually arose from the depths of our talk, and expanded, like the one the fisherman released from the copper vessel, until they blotted everything bright from our vision. Insensibly we yielded to the occult force that swayed us, and indulged in gloomy speculation. We had talked some time upon the proneness of the human mind to mysticism, and the almost universal love of the terrible, when Hammond suddenly said to me, "What do you consider to be the greatest element of terror?"

The question puzzled me. That many things were terrible, I knew. Stumbling over a corpse in the dark; beholding, as I once did, a woman floating down a deep and rapid river, with widely lifted arms, and awful, upturned face, uttering, as she drifted, shrieks that rent one's heart, while we, the spectators, stood frozen at a window which overhung the water at a height of sixty feet, unable to make the slightest effort to save her, but dumbly watching her last supreme agony and her disappearance. A shattered wreck, with no life visible, encountered floating listlessly on the ocean, is a terrible object, for it suggests a huge terror, the proportions of which are veiled. But it now struck me, for the first time, that there must be one great and ruling embodiment of fear—a King of Terrors, to which all others must succumb. What might it be?

To what train of circumstances would it owe its existence?

"I confess, Hammond," I replied to my friend, "I never considered the subject before. That there must be one Something more terrible than any other thing, I feel. I cannot attempt, however, even the most vague definition."

"I am somewhat like you, Harry," he answered. "I feel my capacity to experience a terror greater than anything yet conceived by the human mind—something combining in fearful and unnatural amalgamation hitherto supposed incompatible elements. The calling of the voices in Brockden Brown's novel of 'Wieland' is awful; so is the picture of the Dweller of the Threshhold, in Bulwer's 'Zanoni;' but," he added, shaking his head gloomily, "there is something more horrible still than these."

"Look here, Hammond," I rejoined, "let us drop this kind of talk, for heaven's sake! We shall suffer for it, depend on it."

"I don't know what's the matter with me to-night," he replied, "but my brain is running upon all sorts of weird and awful thoughts. I feel as if I could write a story like Hoffman, to-night, if I were only master of a literary style."

"Well, if we are going to be Hoffmanesque in our talk, I'm off to bed. Opium and nightmares should never be brought together. How sultry it is! Good-night, Hammond."

"Good-night, Harry. Pleasant dreams to you."

"To you, gloomy wretch, afreets, ghouls, and enchanters."

We parted, and each sought his respective chamber. I undressed quickly and got into bed, taking with me, according to my usual custom, a book, over which I generally read myself to sleep. I opened the volume

as soon as I had laid my head upon the pillow, and instantly flung it to the other side of the room. It was Goudon's "History of Monsters"—a curious French work, which I had lately imported from Paris, but which, in the state of mind I had then reached, was anything but an agreeable companion. I resolved to go to sleep at once; so, turning down my gas until nothing but a little blue point of light glimmered on the top of the tube, I composed myself to rest.

The room was in total darkness. The atom of gas that still remained alight did not illuminate a distance of three inches around the burner. I desperately drew my arm across my eyes, as if to shut out even the darkness, and tried to think of nothing. It was in vain. The confounded themes touched on by Hammond in the garden kept obtruding themselves on my brain. I battled against them. I erected ramparts of would-be blankness of intellect to keep them out. They still crowded upon me. While I was lying still as a corpse, hoping that by a perfect physical inaction I should hasten mental repose, an awful incident occurred. A Something dropped, as it seemed, from the ceiling, plumb upon my chest, and the next instant I felt two bony hands encircling my throat, endeavoring to choke me.

I am no coward, and am possessed of considerable physical strength. The suddenness of the attack, instead of stunning me, strung every nerve to its highest tension. My body acted from instinct, before my brain had time to realize the terrors of my position. In an instant I wound two muscular arms around the creature, and squeezed it, with all the strength of despair, against my chest. In a few seconds the bony hands that had fastened on my throat loosened their hold, and I was free to breathe once more. Then commenced a struggle of awful intensity. Immersed in the

most profound darkness, totally ignorant of the nature of the Thing by which I was so suddenly attacked, finding my grasp slipping every moment, by reason, it seemed to me, of the entire nakedness of my assailant, bitten with sharp teeth in the shoulder, neck and chest, having every moment to protect my throat against a pair of sinewy, agile hands, which my utmost efforts could not confine—these were a combination of circumstances to combat which required all the strength, skill, and courage that I possessed.

At last, after a silent, deadly, exhausting struggle, I got my assailant under by a series of incredible efforts of strength. Once pinned, with my knee on what I made out to be its chest, I knew that I was victor. I rested for a moment to breathe. I heard the creature beneath me panting in the darkness, and felt the violent throbbing of a heart. It was apparently as exhausted as I was; that was one comfort. At this moment I remembered that I usually placed under my pillow, before going to bed, a large yellow silk pocket handkerchief. I felt for it instantly; it was there. In a few seconds more I had, after a fashion, pinioned the creature's arms.

I now felt tolerably secure. There was nothing more to be done but to turn on the gas, and, having first seen what my midnight assailant was like, arouse the household. I will confess to being actuated by a certain pride in not giving the alarm before; but I wished to make the capture alone and unaided.

Never losing my hold for an instant, I slipped from the bed to the floor, dragging my captive with me. I had but a few steps to make to reach the gas-burner; these I made with the greatest caution, holding the creature in a grip like a vice. At last I got within arm's length of the tiny speck of blue light which told me where the gas-burner lay. Quick as lightning I re-

leased my grasp with one hand and let on the full flood of light. Then I turned to look at my captive.

I cannot even attempt to give any definition of my sensations the instant after I turned on the gas. I suppose I must have shrieked with terror, for in less than a minute after my room was crowded with the inmates of the house. I shudder now as I think of that awful moment. I saw nothing! Yes; I had one arm firmly clasped round a breathing, panting, corporeal shape, my other hand gripped with all its strength a throat as warm, and apparently fleshly, as my own; and yet, with this living substance in my grasp, with its body pressed against my own, and all in the bright glare of a large jet of gas, I absolutely beheld nothing! Not even an outline—a vapor!

I do not, even at this hour, realize the situation in which I found myself. I cannot recall the astounding incident thoroughly. Imagination in vain tries to compass the awful paradox.

It breathed. I felt its warm breath upon my cheek. It struggled fiercely. It had hands. They clutched me. Its skin was smooth, like my own. There it lay, pressed up close against me, solid as stone—and yet utterly invisible!

I wonder that I did not faint or go mad on the instant. Some wonderful instinct must have sustained me; for, absolutely, in place of loosing my hold on the terrible Enigma, I seemed to gain an additional strength in my moment of horror, and tightened my grasp with such wonderful force that I felt the creature shivering with agony.

Just then Hammond entered my room at the head of the household. As soon as he beheld my face—which, I suppose, must have been an awful sight to look at—he hastened forward, crying, "Great heaven, Harry! what has happened?"

"Hammond! Hammond!" I cried, "come here. O, this is awful! I have been attacked in bed by something or other, which I have held off; but I can't see it —I can't see it!"

Hammond, doubtless struck by the unfeigned horror expressed in my countenance, made one or two steps forward with an anxious yet puzzled expression. A very audible titter burst from the remainder of my visitors. This suppressed laughter made me furious. To laugh at a human being in my position! It was the worst species of cruelty. Now, I can understand why the appearance of a man struggling violently, as it would seem, with an airy nothing, and calling for assistance against a vision, should have appeared ludicrous. Then, so great was my rage against the mocking crowd, that had I the power I would have stricken them dead where they stood.

"Hammond! Hammond!" I cried again, despairingly, "for God's sake come to me. I can hold the—the Thing but a short while longer. It is overpowering me. Help me! Help me!"

"Harry," whispered Hammond, approaching me, "you have been smoking too much opium."

"I swear to you, Hammond, that this is no vision," I answered, in the same low tone. "Don't you see how it shakes my whole frame with its struggles? If you don't believe me, convince yourself. Feel it—touch it."

Hammond advanced and laid his hand in the spot I indicated. A wild cry of horror burst from him. He had felt it!

In a moment he had discovered somewhere in my room a long piece of cord, and was the next instant winding it and knotting it about the body of the unseen being that I clasped in my arms.

"Harry," he said, in a hoarse, agitated voice, for, though he preserved his presence of mind, he was

deeply moved, "Harry, it's all safe now. You may let go, old fellow, if you're tired. The Thing can't move."

I was utterly exhausted, and I gladly loosed my hold.

Hammond stood holding the ends of the cord that bound the Invisible, twisted round his hand, while before him, self-supporting, as it were, he beheld a rope laced and interlaced, and stretching tightly around a vacant space. I never saw a man look so thoroughly stricken with awe. Nevertheless his face expressed all the courage and determination which I knew him to possess. His lips, although white, were set firmly, and one could perceive at a glance that, although stricken with fear, he was not daunted.

The confusion that ensued among the guests of the house who were witnesses of this extraordinary scene between Hammond and myself—who beheld the pantomime of binding this struggling Something—who beheld me almost sinking from physical exhaustion when my task of jailer was over—the confusion and terror that took possession of the bystanders, when they saw all this, was beyond description. The weaker ones fled from the apartment. The few who remained clustered near the door and could not be induced to approach Hammond and his Charge. Still incredulity broke out through their terror. They had not the courage to satisfy themselves, and yet they doubted. It was in vain that I begged of some of the men to come near and convince themselves by touch of the existence in that room of a living being which was invisible. They were incredulous, but did not dare to undeceive themselves. How could a solid, living, breathing body be invisible, they asked. My reply was this. I gave a sign to Hammond, and both of us—conquering our fearful repugnance to touch the invisible creature—lifted it from the ground, manacled as it was, and took it to my bed. Its weight was about that of a boy of fourteen.

"Now, my friends," I said, as Hammond and myself held the creature suspended over the bed, "I can give you self-evident proof that here is a solid, ponderable body, which, nevertheless, you cannot see. Be good enough to watch the surface of the bed attentively."

I was astonished at my own courage in treating this strange event so calmly; but I had recovered from my first terror, and felt a sort of scientific pride in the affair, which dominated every other feeling.

The eyes of the bystanders were immediately fixed on my bed. At a given signal Hammond and I let the creature fall. There was the dull sound of a heavy body alighting on a soft mass. The timbers of the bed creaked. A deep impression marked itself distinctly on the pillow, and on the bed itself. The crowd who witnessed this gave a low cry and rushed from the room. Hammond and I were left alone with our Mystery.

We remained silent for some time, listening to the low, irregular breathing of the creature on the bed, and watching the rustle of the bed-clothes as it impotently struggled to free itself from confinement. Then Hammond spoke.

"Harry, this is awful."

"Ay, awful."

"But not unaccountable."

"Not unaccountable! What do you mean? Such a thing has never occurred since the birth of the world. I know not what to think, Hammond. God grant that I am not mad, and that this is not an insane fantasy!"

"Let us reason a little, Harry. Here is a solid body which we touch, but which we cannot see. The fact is so unusual that it strikes us with terror. Is there no parallel, though, for such a phenomenon? Take a piece of pure glass. It is tangible and transparent. A certain chemical coarseness is all that prevents its being

so entirely transparent as to be totally invisible. It is not theoretically impossible, mind you, to make a glass which shall not reflect a single ray of light—a glass so pure and homogeneous in its atoms that the rays from the sun will pass through it as they do through the air, refracted but not reflected. We do not see the air, and yet we feel it."

"That's all very well, Hammond, but these are inanimate substances. Glass does not breathe; air does not breathe. This thing has a heart that palpitates—a will that moves it—lungs that play, and inspire and respire."

"You forget the phenomena of which we have so often heard of late," answered the Doctor, gravely. "At the meetings called 'spirit circles,' invisible hands have been thrust into the hands of those persons round the table—warm, fleshly hands that seemed to pulsate with mortal life."

"What? Do you think, then, that this Thing is—"

"I don't know what it is," was the solemn reply; "but please the gods I will, with your assistance, thoroughly investigate it."

We watched together, smoking many pipes, all night long, by the bedside of the unearthly being that tossed and panted until it was apparently wearied out. Then we learned by the low, regular breathing that it slept.

The next morning the house was all astir. The boarders congregated on the landing outside my room, and Hammond and myself were lions. We had to answer a thousand questions as to the state of our extraordinary prisoner, for as yet not one person in the house except ourselves could be induced to set foot in the apartment.

The creature was awake. This was evidenced by the convulsive manner in which the bed-clothes were moved in its efforts to escape. There was something truly terrible in beholding, as it were, those second-hand indica-

tions of the terrible writhings and agonized struggles for liberty which themselves were visible.

Hammond and myself had racked our brains during the long night to discover some means by which we might realize the shape and general appearance of the Enigma. As well as we could make out by passing our hands over the creature's form, its outlines and lineaments were human. There was a mouth; a round, smooth head without hair; a nose, which, however, was little elevated above the cheeks; and its hands and feet felt like those of a boy. At first we thought of placing the being on a smooth surface and tracing its outline with chalk, as shoemakers trace the outline of the foot. This plan was given up as being of no value. Such an outline would give not the slightest idea of its conformation.

A happy thought struck me. We would take a cast of it in plaster of Paris. This would give us the solid figure, and satisfy all our wishes. But how to do it? The movements of the creature would disturb the setting of the plastic covering, and distort the mould. Another thought. Why not give it chloroform? It had respiratory organs—that was evident by its breathing. Once reduced to a state of insensibility, we could do with it what we would. Doctor X—— was sent for; and after the worthy physician had recovered from the first shock of amazement, he proceeded to administer the chloroform. In three minutes afterward we were enabled to remove the fetters from the creature's body, and a modeler was busily engaged in covering the invisible form with the moist clay. In five minutes more we had a mold, and before evening a rough fac-simile of the Mystery. It was shaped like a man—distorted, uncouth, and horrible, but still a man. It was small, not over four feet and some inches in height, and its limbs revealed a muscular development that was unparalleled.

Its face surpassed in hideousness anything I had ever seen. Gustave Doré, or Callot, or Tony Johannot, never conceived anything so horrible. There is a face in one of the latter's illustrations to "Un Voyage ou il vous plaira" which somewhat approaches the countenance of this creature, but does not equal it. It was the physiognomy of what I should fancy a ghoul might be. It looked as if it was capable of feeding on human flesh.

Having satisfied our curiosity, and bound everyone in the house to secrecy, it became a question what was to be done with our Enigma? It was impossible that we should keep such a horror in our house; it was equally impossible that such an awful being should be let loose upon the world. I confess that I would have gladly voted for the creature's destruction. But who would shoulder the responsibility? Who would undertake the execution of this horrible semblance of a human being? Day after day this question was deliberated gravely. The boarders all left the house. Mrs. Moffat was in despair, and threatened Hammond and myself with all sorts of legal penalties if we did not remove the horror. Our answer was, "We will go if you like, but we decline taking this creature with us. Remove it yourself if you please. It appeared in your house. On you the responsibility rests." To this there was, of course, no answer. Mrs. Moffat could not obtain for love or money a person who would even approach the Mystery.

The most singular part of the affair was that we were entirely ignorant of what the creature habitually fed on. Everything in the way of nutriment that we could think of was placed before it, but was never touched. It was awful to stand by, day after day, and see the clothes toss, and hear the hard breathing, and know that it was starving.

Ten, twelve days, a fortnight passed, and it still lived. The pulsations of the heart, however, were daily grow-

ing fainter, and had now nearly ceased. It was evident that the creature was dying for want of sustenance. While this terrible life-struggle was going on, I felt miserable. I could not sleep. Horrible as the creature was, it was pitiful to think of the pangs it was suffering.

At last it died. Hammond and I found it cold and stiff one morning in the bed. The heart had ceased to beat, the lungs to inspire. We hastened to bury it in the garden. It was a strange funeral, the dropping of that viewless corpse into the damp hole. The cast of its form I gave to Doctor X——, who keeps it in his museum in Tenth Street.

As I am on the eve of a long journey from which I may not return, I have drawn up this narrative of an event the most singular that has ever come to my knowledge.

THE TIME MACHINE

THE TIME MACHINE

H. G. Wells

CHAPTER I.

THE INVENTOR.

THE man who made the Time Machine—the man I shall call the Time Traveler—was well known in scientific circles a few years since, and the fact of his disappearance is also well known. He was a mathematician of peculiar subtlety, and one of our most conspicuous investigators in molecular physics. He did not confine himself to abstract science. Several ingenious, and one or two profitable, patents were his: very profitable they were, these last, as his handsome house at Richmond testified. To those who were his intimates, however, his scientific investigations were as nothing to his gift of speech. In the after-dinner hours he was ever a vivid and variegated talker, and at times his fantastic, often paradoxical, conceptions came so thick and close as to form one continuous discourse. At these times he was as unlike the popular conception of a scientific investigator as a man could be. His cheeks would flush, his eyes grow bright; and the stranger the ideas that sprang and crowded into his brain, the happier and the more animated would be his exposition.

Up to the last there was held at his house a kind

of informal gathering, which it was my privilege to attend, and where, at one time or another, I have met most of our distinguished literary and scientific men. There was a plain dinner at seven. After that we would adjourn to a room of easy chairs and little tables, and there, with libations of alcohol and reeking pipes, we would invoke the god. At first the conversation was mere fragmentary chatter, with some local lacunae of digestive silence; but toward nine or half-past nine, if the god was favorable, some particular topic would triumph by a kind of natural selection, and would become the common interest. So it was, I remember, on the last Thursday but one of all—the Thursday when I first heard of the Time Machine.

I had been jammed in a corner with a gentleman who shall be disguised as Filby. He had been running down Milton—the public neglects poor Filby's little verses shockingly; and as I could think of nothing but the relative status of Filby and the man he criticised, and was much too timid to discuss that, the arrival of that moment of fusion, when our several conversations were suddenly merged into a general discussion, was a great relief to me.

"What's that is nonsense?" said a well-known Medical Man, speaking across Filby to the Psychologist.

"He thinks," said the Psychologist, "that Time's only a kind of Space."

"It's not thinking," said the Time Traveler; "it's knowledge."

"Foppish affectation," said Filby, still harping upon his wrongs; but I feigned a great interest in this question of Space and Time.

"Kant——" began the Psychologist.

"Confound Kant!" said the Time Traveler. "I tell you I'm right. I've got experimental proof of it. I'm not a metaphysician." He addressed the Medical Man

across the room, and so brought the whole company into his own circle. "It's the most promising departure in experimental work that has ever been made. It will simply revolutionize life. Heaven knows what life will be when I've carried the thing through."

"As long as it's not the water of immortality I don't mind," said the distinguished Medical Man. "What is it?"

"Only a paradox," said the Psychologist.

The Time Traveler said nothing in reply, but smiled and began tapping his pipe upon the fender curb. This was the invariable presage of a dissertation.

"You have to admit that time is a spatial dimension," said the Psychologist, emboldened by immunity and addressing the Medical Man, "and then all sorts of remarkable consequences are found inevitable. Among others, that it becomes possible to travel about in time."

The Time Traveler chuckled. "You forget that I'm going to prove it experimentally."

"Let's have your experiment," said the Psychologist.

"I think we'd like the argument first," said Filby.

"It's this," said the Time Traveler. "You must follow me carefully. I shall have to controvert one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted. The geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception."

"Is not that rather a large thing to expect us to begin upon?" said Filby.

"I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. You will soon admit as much as I want from you. You know, of course, that a mathematical line, a line of thickness nil, has no real existence. They taught you that? Neither has a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions."

"That is all right," said the Psychologist.

"Nor, having only length, breadth, and thickness, can a cube have a real existence?"

"There I object," said Filby. "Of course, a solid body may exist. All real things——"

"So most people think. But wait a moment. Can an instantaneous cube exist?"

"Don't follow you," said Filby.

"Can a cube that does not last for any time at all, have a real existence?"

Filby became pensive.

"Clearly," the Philosophical Inventor proceeded, "any real body must have extension in four directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and—Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook the fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives."

"That," said a Very Young Man, making spasmodic efforts to relight his cigar over the lamp, "that—very clear, indeed."

"Now, it is very remarkable that this is so extensively overlooked," continued the Philosophical Inventor, with a slight accession of cheerfulness. "Really, this is what is meant by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimension do not know they mean it. It is only another way of looking at Time. There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except that our consciousness moves along it. But some foolish people have got hold of the wrong side of

that idea. You have all heard what they have to say about this Fourth Dimension?"

"I have not," said the Provincial Mayor.

"It is simply this, That space, as our mathematicians have it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to these planes, each at right angles to the others. But some philosophical people have been asking why three dimensions particularly—why not another direction at right angles to the other three?—and have even tried to construct a Four-Dimension geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York Mathematical Society only a month or so ago. You know how on a flat surface, which has only two dimensions, we can represent a figure of a Three-Dimensional solid, and similarly they think that by a model of three dimensions they could represent one of four—if they could master the perspective of the thing. See?"

"I think so," murmured the Provincial Mayor; and, knitting his brows, he lapsed into an introspective state, his lips moving as one who repeats mystic words. "Yes, I think I see it now," he said, after some time, brightening in a quite transitory manner.

"Well, I do not mind telling you I have been at work upon this geometry of Four Dimensions for some time. Some of my results are curious: for instance, here is a portrait of a man at eight years old, another at fifteen, another at seventeen, another at twenty-three, and so on. All these are evidently sections, as it were, Three-Dimensional representations of his Four-Dimensional being, which is a fixed and unalterable thing.

"Scientific people," proceeded the Philosopher, after the pause required for the proper assimilation of this, "know very well that Time is only a kind of Space. Here is a popular scientific diagram, a weather record.

This line I trace with my finger shows the movement of the barometer. Yesterday it was so high, yesterday night it fell, then this morning it rose again, and so gently upward to here. Surely the mercury did not trace this line in any of the dimensions of space generally recognized? But certainly it traced such a line, and that line, therefore, we must conclude, was along the Time Dimension.'"

"But," said the Medical Man, staring hard at a coal in the fire, "if Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move about in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?"

The Philosophical Person smiled. "Are you so sure we can move freely in Space? Right and left we can go, backward and forward freely enough, and men always have done so. I admit we move freely in two dimensions. But how about up and down? Gravitation limits us there."

"Not exactly," said the Medical Man. "There are balloons."

"But before the balloons, save for spasmodic jumping and the inequalities of the surface, man had no freedom of vertical movement."

"Still, they could move a little up and down," said the Medical Man.

"Easier, far easier, down than up."

"And you cannot move at all in Time. You cannot get away from the present moment."

"My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. That is just where the whole world has gone wrong. We are always getting away from the present moment. Our mental existences, which are immaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the Time Dimension with a uniform velocity from the cradle to the grave.

Just as we should travel down if we began our existence fifty miles above the earth's surface."

"But the great difficulty is this," interrupted the Psychologist; "You can move about in all directions of Space, but you cannot move about in Time."

"That is the germ of my great discovery. But you are wrong to say that we cannot move about in Time. For instance, if I am recalling an incident very vividly I go back to the instant of its occurrence; I become absent-minded, as you say. I jump back for a moment. Of course we have no means for staying back for any length of time any more than a savage or an animal has of staying six feet above the ground. But a civilized man is better off than the savage in this respect. He can go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should we not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time Dimension; or even to turn about and travel the other way?"

"Oh, this," began Filby, "is all——"

"Why not?" said the Philosophical Inventor.

"It's against reason," said Filby.

"What reason?" said the Philosophical Inventor.

"You can show black is white by argument," said Filby, "but you will never convince me."

"Possibly not," said the Philosophical Inventor. "But now you begin to see the object of my investigations into the geometry of Four Dimensions. Long ago I had a vague inkling of a machine——"

"To travel through Time!" said the Very Young Man.

"That shall travel indifferently in any direction of Space and Time, as the driver determines."

Filby contented himself with laughing.

"It would be remarkably convenient," the Psychologist suggested. "One might travel back and witness the battle of Hastings."

"Don't you think you would attract attention?" said the Medical Man. "Our ancestors had no great tolerance for anachronisms."

"One might get one's Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato," the Very Young Man thought.

"In which case they would certainly plow you for the little-go. The German scholars have improved Greek so much."

"Then, there is the future," said the Very Young Man. "Just think! One might invest all one's money, leave it to accumulate at interest, and hurry on ahead."

"To discover a society," said I, "erected on a strictly communistic basis."

"Of all the wild, extravagant theories——" began the Psychologist.

"Yes, so it seemed to me, and so I never talked of it until——"

"Experimental verification!" cried I. "You are going to verify that!"

"The experiment!" cried Filby, who was getting brain-weary.

"Let's see your experiment, anyhow," said the Psychologist, "though it's all humbug, you know."

The Time Traveler smiled round at us. Then, still smiling faintly, and with his hands deep in his trousers pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, and we heard his slippers shuffling down the long passage to his laboratory.

The Psychologist looked at us. "I wonder what he's got."

"Some sleight-of-hand trick or other," said the Medical Man, and Filby tried to tell us about a conjuror he had seen at Burslem, but before he had finished his preface the Time Traveler came back, and Filby's anecdote collapsed.

The thing the Time Traveler held in his hand was a

glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance. And now I must be explicit, for this that follows—unless his explanation is to be accepted—is an absolutely unaccountable thing. He took one of the small octagonal tables that were scattered about the room and set it in front of the fire, with two legs on the hearthrug. On this table he placed the mechanism. Then he drew up a chair and sat down. The only other object on the table was a small shaded lamp, the bright light of which fell full upon the model. There were also perhaps a dozen candles about, two in brass candlesticks upon the mantel and several in sconces, so that the room was brilliantly illuminated. I sat in a low armchair nearest the fire, and I drew this forward so as to be almost between the Time Traveler and the fireplace. Filby sat behind him, looking over his shoulder. The Medical Man and the Rector watched him in profile from the right, the Psychologist from the left. We were all on the alert. It appears incredible to me that any kind of trick, however subtly conceived and however adroitly done, could have been played upon us under these conditions.

The Time Traveler looked at us and then at the mechanism.

"Well?" said the Psychologist.

"This little affair," said the Time Traveler, resting his elbows upon the table and pressing his hands together above the apparatus, "is only a model. It is my plan for a machine to travel through Time. You will notice that it looks singularly askew, and that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal." He pointed to the part with his finger. "Also, here is one little white lever, and here is another."

The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing. "It's beautifully made," he said.

"It took two years to make," retorted the Time Traveler. Then, when we had all done as the Medical Man, he said: "Now I want you to clearly understand that this lever, being pressed over, sends the machine gliding into the future, and this other reverses the motion. This saddle represents the seat of a time traveler. Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future time, and disappear. Have a good look at the thing. Look at the table, too, and satisfy yourselves there is no trickery. I don't want to waste this model and then be told I'm a quack."

There was a minute's pause perhaps. The Psychologist seemed about to speak to me, but changed his mind. Then the Time Traveler put forth his finger toward the lever. "No," he said, suddenly; "lend me your hand." And turning to the Psychologist, he took that individual's hand in his own, and told him to put out his forefinger. So that it was the Psychologist himself who sent forth the model Time Machine on its interminable voyage. We all saw the lever turn. I am absolutely certain there was no trickery. There was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone—vanished! Save for the lamp the table was bare.

Everyone was silent for a minute. Then Filby said he was d——d.

The Psychologist recovered from his stupor, and suddenly looked under the table. At that the Time Traveler laughed cheerfully. "Well?" he said, with a rem-

iniscence of the Psychologist. Then, getting up, he went to the tobacco jar on the mantel, and with his back to us began to fill his pipe.

We stared at each other.

"Look here," said the Medical Man, "are you in earnest about this? Do you seriously believe that that machine has traveled into Time?"

"Certainly," said the Time Traveler, stooping to light a spill at the fire. Then he turned, lighting his pipe, to look at the Psychologist's face. (The Psychologist, to show that he was not unhinged, helped himself to a cigar and tried to light it uncut.) "What is more, I have a big machine nearly finished in there," he indicated the laboratory, "and when that is put together I mean to have a journey on my own account."

"You mean to say that that machine has traveled into the future?" said Filby.

"Into the future or the past—I don't, for certain, know which."

After an interval, the Psychologist had an inspiration.

"It must have gone into the past if it has gone anywhere," he said.

"Why?" said the Time Traveler.

"Because I presume that it has not moved in space, and if it traveled into the future it would still be here all this time, since it must have traveled through this time."

"But," said I, "if it traveled into the past it would have been visible when we came first into this room; and last Thursday when we were here; and the Thursday before that; and so forth!"

"Serious objections," remarked the Rector, with an air of impartiality, turning toward the Time Traveler.

"Not a bit," said the Time Traveler, and, to the

Psychologist: "You think. You can explain that. It's presentation below the threshold, you know, diluted presentation."

"Of course," said the Psychologist, and reassured us. "That's a simple point in psychology. I should have thought of it. It's plain enough, and helps the paradox delightfully. We cannot see it, nor can we appreciate this machine, any more than we can the spoke of a wheel spinning, or a bullet flying through the air. If it is traveling through time fifty times or a hundred times faster than we are, if it gets through a minute while we get through a second, the impression it creates will, of course, be only one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of what it would make if it were not traveling in time. That's plain enough." He passed his hand through the space in which the machine had been. "You see?" he said, laughing.

We sat and stared at the vacant table for a minute or so. Then the Time Traveler asked us what we thought of it all.

"It sounds plausible enough to-night," said the Medical Man; "but wait until to-morrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning."

"Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?" asked the Time Traveler. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hand, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism which we had seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some

sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

"Look here," said the Medical Man, "are you perfectly serious? Or is this a trick—like that ghost you showed us last Christmas?"

"Upon that machine," said the Time Traveler, holding the lamp aloft. "I intend to explore Time. Is that plain? I was never more serious in my life."

CHAPTER II.

THE TIME TRAVELER RETURNS

I think that at that time none of us quite believed in the Time Machine. The fact is, the Time Traveler was one of those men who are too clever to be believed; you never felt that you saw all round him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness. Had Filby shown the model and explained the matter in the Time Traveler's words, we should have shown him far less skepticism. The point is, we should have seen his motives—a pork butcher could understand Filby. But the Time Traveler had more than a touch of whim among his elements, and we distrusted him. Things that would have made the fame of a clever man seemed tricks in his hands. It is a mistake to do things too easily. The serious people who took him seriously never felt quite sure of his deportment; they were somehow aware that trusting their reputations for judgment with him, was like furnishing a nursery with eggshell china. So I don't think any of us said very much about time traveling in the interval between that Thursday and the next, though its odd potentialities ran, no doubt, in most of our minds: its plausibility, that is, its prac-

tical incredibleness, the curious possibilities of anachronism and of utter confusion it suggested. For my own part, I was particularly preoccupied with the trick of the model. That I remember discussing with the Medical Man, whom I met on Friday at the Linnaean. He said he had seen a similar thing at Tubingen, and laid considerable stress on the blowing-out of the candle. But how the trick was done he could not explain.

The next Thursday I went again to Richmond—I suppose I was one of the Time Traveler's most constant guests—and, arriving late, found four or five men already assembled in the drawing-room. The Medical Man was standing before the fire with a sheet of paper in one hand and his watch in the other. I looked round for the Time Traveler, and—

"It's half-past seven now," said the Medical Man. "I suppose we'd better have dinner?"

"Where's ——?" said I, naming our host.

"You've just come? It's rather odd. He's unavoidably detained. He asks me in his note to lead off with dinner at seven if he's not back. Says he'll explain when he comes."

"It seems a pity to let the dinner spoil," said the Editor of a well-known daily paper; and thereupon the Doctor rang the bell.

The Psychologist was the only person besides the Doctor and myself who had attended the previous dinner. The other men were Blank, the Editor aforementioned, a certain journalist, and another—a quiet, shy man with a beard—whom I didn't know, and who, as far as my observation went, never opened his mouth all the evening. There was some speculation at the dinner table about the Time Traveler's absence, and I suggested time traveling, in a half-jocular spirit. The Editor wanted that explained to him, and the Psycholo-

gist volunteered a wooden account of the "ingenious paradox and trick" we had witnessed that day, week. He was in the midst of his exposition when the door from the corridor opened slowly and without noise. I was facing the door, and saw it first.

"Hallo!" I said. "At last!"

And the door opened wider, and the Time Traveler stood before us. I gave a cry of surprise.

"Good Heavens, man! what's the matter?" cried the Medical Man, who saw him next. And the whole tableful turned toward the door.

He was in an amazing plight. His coat was dusty and dirty, and smeared with green down the sleeves; his hair disordered, and as it seemed to me grayer—either with dust and dirt or because its color had actually faded. His face was ghastly pale; his chin had a brown cut on it—a cut half-healed; his expression was haggard and drawn, as by intense suffering. For a moment he hesitated in the doorway, as if he had been dazzled by the light. Then he came into the room. He walked with just such a limp as I have seen in footsore tramps. We stared at him in silence, expecting him to speak.

He said not a word, but came painfully to the table, and made a motion toward the wine. The Editor filled a glass of champagne and pushed it toward him. He drained it, and it seemed to do him good; for he looked round the table, and the ghost of his old smile flickered across his face.

"What on earth have you been up to, man?" said the Doctor.

The Time Traveler did not seem to hear. "Don't let me disturb you," he said, with a certain faltering articulation. "I'm all right." He stopped, held out his glass for more, and took it off at a draught. "That's good," he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a faint

color came into his cheeks. His glance flickered over our faces with a certain dull approval, and then went round the warm and comfortable room. Then he spoke again, still, as it were, feeling his way among his words. "I'm going to wash and dress, and then I'll come down and explain things. Save me some of that mutton. I'm starving for a bit of meat."

He looked across at the Editor, who was a rare visitor, and hoped he was all right. The Editor began a question.

"Tell you presently," said the Time Traveler. "I'm —funny! Be all right in a minute."

He put down his glass, and walked toward the staircase door. Again I remarked his lameness and the soft padding sound of his footfall, and standing up in my place I saw his feet as he went out. He had nothing on them but a pair of tattered, blood-stained socks. Then the door closed upon him. I had half a mind to follow, till I remembered how he detested any fuss about himself. For a minute, perhaps, my mind was wool-gathering. Then, "Remarkable Behavior of an Eminent Scientist," I heard the Editor say, thinking (after his wont) in headlines. And this brought my attention back to the bright dinner table.

"What's the game?" said the Journalist. "Has he been doing the Amateur Cadger? I don't follow."

I met the eye of the Psychologist, and read my own interpretation in his face. I thought of the Time Traveler limping painfully upstairs. I don't think anyone else had noticed his lameness.

The first to recover completely from this surprise was the Medical Man, who rang the bell—the Time Traveler hated to have servants waiting at dinner—for a hot plate. At that the Editor turned to his knife and fork with a grunt, and the Silent Man followed suit.

The dinner was resumed. Conversation was exclamatory for a little while, with gaps of wonderment; and then the Editor got fervent in his curiosity.

"Does our friend eke out his modest income with a crossing, or has he his Nebuchadnezzar phases?" he inquired.

"I feel assured it's this business of the Time Machine," I said, and took up the Psychologist's account of our previous meeting.

The new guests were frankly incredulous. The Editor raised objections.

"What was this time traveling? A man couldn't cover himself with dust by rolling in a paradox, could he?"

And then, as the idea came home to him, he resorted to caricature. Hadn't they any clothes brushes in the future? The Journalist, too, would not believe at any price, and joined the Editor in the easy work of heaping ridicule on the whole thing. They were both the new kind of Journalist—very joyous, irreverent young men. "Our Special Correspondent in the Day After To-Morrow reports," the Journalist was saying—or rather, shouting—when the Time Traveler came back. He was dressed in ordinary evening clothes, and nothing save his haggard look remained of the change that had startled me.

"I say," said the Editor, hilariously, "these chaps here say you have been traveling into the middle of next week! Tell us all about little Rosebery, will you? What will you take for the lot?"

The Time Traveler came to the place reserved for him without a word. He smiled quietly, in his old way.

"Where's my mutton?" he said. "What a treat it is to stick a fork into meat again!"

"Story!" cried the Editor.

"Story be d——d!" said the Time Traveler. "I want something to eat. I won't say a word until I get some peptone into my arteries. Thanks! And the salt."

"One word," said I. "Have you been time traveling?"

"Yes," said the Time Traveler, with his mouth full, nodding his head.

"I'd give a shilling a line for a verbatim note," said the Editor. The Time Traveler pushed his glass toward the Silent Man and rang it with his finger nail; at which the Silent Man, who had been staring at his face, started convulsively, and poured him wine. The rest of the dinner was uncomfortable. For my own part, sudden questions kept on rising to my lips, and I dare say it was the same with the others. The Journalist tried to relieve the tension by telling anecdotes of Hettie Potter. The Time Traveler devoted his attention to his dinner, and displayed the appetite of a tramp. The Medical Man smoked a cigarette, and watched the Time Traveler through his eyelashes. The Silent Man seemed even more clumsy than usual, and drank champagne with regularity and determination out of sheer nervousness. At last the Time Traveler pushed his plate away and looked round us.

"I suppose I must apologize," he said. "I was simply starving. I've had a most amazing time." He reached out his hand for a cigar, and cut the end. "But come into the smoking-room. It's too long a story to tell over greasy plates." And ringing the bell in passing, he led the way into the adjoining room.

"You have told Blank and Dash and Chose about the machine?" he said to me, leaning back in his easy chair and naming the three new guests.

"But the thing's a mere paradox," said the Editor.

"I can't argue to-night. I don't mind telling you the story, but I can't argue. I will," he went on, "tell

you the story of what has happened to me, if you like, but you must refrain from interruptions. I want to tell it. Badly. Most of it will sound like lying. So be it! It's true—every word of it, all the same. I was in my laboratory at four o'clock, and since then—I've lived eight days—such days as no human being ever lived before! I'm nearly worn out, but I shan't sleep till I've told this thing over to you. Then I shall go to bed. But no interruptions! Is it agreed?"

"Agreed!" said the Editor, and the rest of us echoed "Agreed!" And with that the Time Traveler began his story as I have set it forth. He sat back in his chair at first, and spoke like a weary man. Afterward he got more animated. In writing it down I feel with only too much keenness the inadequacy of pen and ink —and, above all, my own inadequacy—to express its quality. You read, I will suppose, attentively enough; but you cannot see the speaker's white, sincere face in the bright circle of the little lamp, nor hear the intonation of his voice. You cannot know how his expression followed the turns of his story! Most of us hearers were in shadow, for the candles in the smoking-room had not been lighted, and only the face of the Journalist and the legs of the Silent Man from the knees downward were illuminated. At first we glanced now and again at each other. After a time we ceased to do that, and looked only at the Time Traveler's face.

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY BEGINS.

"I told some of you last Thursday of the principles of the Time Machine, and showed you the actual thing itself, incomplete, in the workshop. There it is now, a

little travel-worn, truly; and one of the ivory bars is cracked, and a brass rail is bent; but the rest of it is sound enough. I expected to finish it on Friday; but on Friday, when the putting together was nearly done, I found that one of the nickel bars was exactly one inch too short, and this I had to get remade; so that the thing was not complete until this morning. It was at ten o'clock to-day that the first of all Time Machines began its career. I gave it a last tap, tried all the screws again, put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and sat myself in the saddle. I suppose a suicide who holds a pistol to his skull feels much the same wonder at what will come next as I felt then. I took the starting lever in one hand, and the stopping one in the other, pressed the first, and almost immediately the second. I seemed to reel; I felt a nightmare sensation of falling; and, looking round, I saw the laboratory exactly as before. Had anything happened? For a moment I suspected that my intellect had tricked me. Then I noted the clock. A moment before, as it seemed, it had stood at a minute or so past ten; now it was nearly half-past three.

"I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both my hands, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs. Watchett came in, and walked, apparently without seeing me, toward the garden door. I suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came to-morrow. The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. To-morrow night came black, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur

filled my ears and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.

"I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time traveling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback—of a helpless, headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, day followed night, like the flap, flap, flap of some rotating body. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed, and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then in the intermittent darkness, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous grayness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous color like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch in space, the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

"The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hillside upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me gray and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapor, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, fluctuated, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and

fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changing—melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the dials that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that, consequently, my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.

"The unpleasant sensations of the start were less poignant now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked, indeed, a clumsy swaying of the machine, for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me I flung myself into futurity. At first I scarce thought of stopping, scarce thought of anything but these new sensations. But presently a fresh series of impressions grew up in my mind—a certain curiosity, and therewith a certain dread—until they at last took complete possession of me. What strange developments of humanity, what wonderful advances upon our rudimentary civilization, I thought, might not appear when I came to look nearly into the dim, elusive world that raced and fluctuated before my eyes! I saw great and splendid architectures rising about me, more massive than any buildings of our own time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist. I saw a richer green flow up the hillside, and remain there without any wintry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed very fair. And so my mind came round to the business of stopping.

"The peculiar risk lay in the possibility of my finding some substance in the space which I, or the machine, occupied. So long as I traveled at a high velocity

through time, this scarcely mattered: I was, so to speak, attenuated—was slipping like a vapor through the interstices of intervening substances! But to come to a stop involved the jamming of myself, molecule by molecule, into whatever lay in my way, meant bringing my atoms into such intimate contact with those of the obstacle that a profound chemical reaction—possibly a far-reaching explosion—would result, and blow myself and my apparatus out of the Rigid Universe—out of all possible dimensions—into the Unknown. This possibility had occurred to me again and again while I was making the machine; but then I had cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk—one of the risks a man has got to take! Now the risk was inevitable, I no longer saw it in the same cheerful light. The fact is that, insensibly, the absolute strangeness of everything, the sickly jarring and swaying of the machine, above all the feeling of prolonged falling, had absolutely upset my nerve. I told myself that I could never stop, and with a gust of petulance I resolved to stop forthwith. Like an impatient fool, I lugged over the lever, and incontinently the thing went reeling over, and I was flung headlong through the air.

"There was the sound of a clap of thunder in my ears. I may have been stunned for a moment. A pitiless hail was hissing round me, and I was sitting on soft turf in front of the overset machine. Everything still seemed gray, but presently I remarked that the confusion in my ears was gone. I looked round me. I was on what seemed to be a little lawn in a garden, surrounded by rhododendron bushes, and I noticed that their mauve and purple blossoms were dropping in a shower under the beating of the hailstones. The rebounding, dancing hail hung in a little cloud over the machine, and drove along the ground like smoke.

in a moment I was wet to the skin. 'Fine hospitality,' said I, 'to a man who has traveled innumerable years to see you!'

"Presently I thought what a fool I was to get wet. I stood up and looked round me. A colossal figure, carved apparently in some white stone, loomed indistinctly beyond the rhododendrons through the hazy downpour. But all else of the world was invisible.

"My sensations would be hard to describe. As the columns of hail grew thinner, I saw the white figure more distinctly. It was very large, for a silver birch tree touched its shoulder. It was of white marble, in shape something like a winged sphinx, but the wings, instead of being carried vertically at the sides, were spread so that it seemed to hover. The pedestal, it seemed to me, was of bronze, and was thick with verdigris. It chanced that the face was toward me; the sightless eyes seemed to watch me; there was the faint shadow of a smile on the lips. It was greatly weather-worn, and that imparted an unpleasant suggestion of disease. I stood looking at it for a little space—half a minute, perhaps, or half an hour. It seemed to advance and to recede as the hail drove before it denser or thinner. At last I tore my eyes from it for a moment, and saw that the hail curtain had worn threadbare, and that the sky was lightening with the promise of the sun.

"I looked up again at the crouching white shape, and the full temerity of my voyage came suddenly upon me. What might appear when that hazy curtain was altogether withdrawn? What might not have happened to men? What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might see some old-world savage animal, only the

more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness —a foul creature to be incontinently slain.

"Already I saw other vast shapes—huge buildings with intricate parapets and tall columns, with a wooded hillside dimly creeping in upon me through the lessening storm. I was seized with a panic fear. I turned frantically to the Time Machine, and strove hard to readjust it. As I did so the shafts of the sun smote through the thunder storm. The gray downpour was swept aside and vanished like the trailing garments of a ghost. Above me, in the intense blue of the summer sky, some faint brown shreds of clouds whirled into nothingness. The great buildings about me stood out clear and distinct, shining with the wet of the thunder storm, and picked out in white by the unmelted hailstones piled along their courses. I felt naked in a strange world. I felt as perhaps a bird may feel in the clear air, knowing the hawk wings above and will swoop. My fear grew to frenzy. I took a breathing space, set my teeth, and again grappled fiercely, wrist and knee, with the machine. It gave under my desperate onset and turned over. It struck my chin violently. One hand on the saddle, the other on the lever, I stood panting heavily in attitude to mount again.

"But with this recovery of a prompt retreat my courage recovered. I looked more curiously and less fearfully at this world of the remote future. In a circular opening, high up in the wall of the nearer house, I saw a group of figures clad in rich soft robes. They had seen me, and their faces were directed toward me.

"Then I heard voices approaching me. Coming through the bushes by the white sphinx were the heads and shoulders of men running. One of these emerged in a pathway leading straight to the little lawn upon

which I stood with my machine. He was a slight creature—perhaps four feet high—clad in a purple tunic, girdled at the waist with a leather belt. Sandals or buskins—I could not clearly distinguish which—were on his feet; his legs were bare to the knees, and his head was bare. Noticing that, I noticed for the first time how warm the air was.

"He struck me as being a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail. His flushed face reminded me of the more beautiful kind of consumptive—that hectic beauty of which we used to hear so much. At the sight of him I suddenly regained confidence. I took my hands from the machine.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

"In another moment we were standing face to face, I and this fragile thing out of futurity. He came straight up to me and laughed into my eyes. The absence of any sign of fear from his bearing struck me at once. Then he turned to the two others who were following him and spoke to them in a strange and very sweet and liquid tongue.

"There were others coming, and presently a little group of perhaps eight or ten of these exquisite creatures were about me. One of them addressed me. It came into my head, oddly enough, that my voice was too harsh and too deep for them. So I shook my head, and pointing to my ears, shook it again. He came a step forward, hesitated, and then touched my hand. Then I felt other soft little tentacles upon my back and shoulders. They wanted to make sure I was real. There was nothing in this at all alarming. Indeed, there was something

in these pretty little people that inspired confidence—a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease. And besides, they looked so frail that I could fancy myself flinging the whole dozen of them about like ninepins. But I made a sudden motion to warn them when I saw their little pink hands feeling at the Time Machine. Happily then, when it was not too late, I thought of a danger I had hitherto forgotten, and reaching over the bars of the machine I unscrewed the little levers that would set it in motion, and put these in my pocket. Then I turned again to see what I could do in the way of communication.

"And then, looking more nearly into their features, I saw some further peculiarities in their Dresden china type of prettiness. Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest suggestion of it on the face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips, and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and—this may seem egotism on my part—I fancied even then that there was a certain lack of the interest I might have expected in them.

"As they made no effort to communicate with me, but simply stood round me smiling and speaking in soft, cooing notes to each other, I began the conversation. I pointed to the Time Machine and to myself. Then, hesitating for a moment how to express Time, I pointed to the sun. At once a quaintly pretty little figure in checkered purple and white, followed my gesture, and then astonished me by imitating the sound of thunder.

"For the moment I was staggered, though the import of his gesture was plain enough. The question had come into my mind abruptly: Were these creatures fools? You may hardly understand how it took me.

You see I had always anticipated that the people of the year Thirty-two Thousand odd would be incredibly in front of us in knowledge, art, everything. Then one of them suddenly asked me a question that showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children—asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunder storm. It let loose the judgment I had suspended upon their clothes, their frail, light limbs, and fragile features. A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine in vain.

"I nodded, pointed to the sun, and gave them such a vivid rendering of a thunder clap as startled them. They all withdrew a pace or so and bowed. Then came one laughing toward me, carrying a chain of beautiful flowers, altogether new to me, and put it about my neck. The idea was received with melodious applause; and presently they were all running to and fro for flowers, and laughingly flinging them upon me until I was almost smothered with blossom. You who have never seen the like can scarcely imagine what delicate and wonderful flowers countless years of culture had created. Then someone suggested that their plaything should be exhibited in the nearest building, and so I was led past the sphinx of white marble, which had seemed to watch me all the while with a smile at my astonishment, toward a vast gray edifice of fretted stone. As I went with them the memory of my confident anticipations of a profoundly grave and intellectual posterity came, with irresistible merriment, to my mind.

"The building had a large entry and was altogether of colossal dimensions. I was naturally most occupied with the growing crowd of little people, and with the big open portals that yawned before me shadowy and mysterious. My general impression of the world I saw

over their heads was of a tangled waste of beautiful bushes and flowers, a long neglected and yet weedless garden. I saw a number of tall spikes of strange white flowers, measuring a foot perhaps across the spread of the waxen petals. They grew scattered, as if wild, among the variegated shrubs, but, as I say, I did not examine them closely at this time. The Time Machine was left deserted on the turf among the rhododendrons.

"The arch of the doorway was richly carved, but naturally I did not observe the carving very narrowly, though I fancied I saw suggestions of old Phœnician decorations as I passed through, and it struck me that they were very badly broken and weather-worn. Several more brightly clad people met me in the doorway, and so we entered, I, dressed in dingy nineteenth century garments, looking grotesque enough, garlanded with flowers, and surrounded by an eddying mass of bright, soft-colored robes and shining white limbs, in a melodious whirl of laughter and laughing speech.

"The big doorway opened into a proportionately great hall hung with brown. The roof was in shadow and the windows, partially glazed with colored glass, and partially unglazed, admitted a tempered light. The floor was made up of huge blocks of some very hard white metal, not plates nor slabs—blocks, and it was so much worn, as I judged by the going to and fro of past generations, as to be deeply channeled along the more frequented ways. Transverse to the length were innumerable tables made of slabs of polished stone, raised, perhaps, a foot from the floor, and upon these were heaps of fruits. Some I recognized as a kind of hypertrophied raspberry and orange, but for the most part they were strange.

"Between the tables were scattered a great number of cushions. Upon these my conductors seated themselves, signing for me to do likewise. With a pretty

absence of ceremony they began to eat the fruit with their hands, flinging peel, and stalks, and so forth, into the round openings in the sides of the tables. I was not loth to follow their example, for I felt thirsty and hungry. As I did so I surveyed the hall at my leisure.

"And perhaps the thing that struck me most was its dilapidated look. The stained-glass windows, which displayed only a geometrical pattern, were broken in many places, and the curtains that hung across the lower end were thick with dust. And it caught my eye that the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. Nevertheless, the general effect was extremely rich and picturesque. There were, perhaps, a couple of hundred people dining in the hall, and most of them, seated as near to me as they could come, were watching me with interest, their little eyes shining over the fruit they were eating. All were clad in the same soft, and yet strong, silky material.

"Fruit, by the bye, was all their diet. These people of the remote future were strict vegetarians, and while I was with them, in spite of some carnal cravings, I had to be frugivorous also. Indeed, I found afterward that horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, had followed the ichthyosaurus into extinction. But the fruits were very delightful; one, in particular, that seemed to be in season all the time I was there—a floury thing in a three-sided husk—was especially good, and I made it my staple. At first I was puzzled by all these strange fruits, and by the strange flowers I saw, but later I began to perceive their import.

"However, I am telling you of my fruit dinner in the distant future now. So soon as my appetite was a little checked, I determined to make a resolute attempt to learn the speech of these new men of mine. Clearly that was the next thing to do. The fruits seemed a

convenient thing to begin upon, and holding one of these up I began a series of interrogative sounds and gestures. I had some considerable difficulty in conveying my meaning. At first my efforts met with a stare of surprise or inextinguishable laughter, but presently a fair-haired little creature seemed to grasp my intention and repeated a name. They had to chatter and explain their business at great length to each other, and my first attempts to make their exquisite little sounds of the language caused an immense amount of genuine, if uncivil amusement. However, I felt like a schoolmaster amid children, and persisted, and presently I had a score of noun substantives at least at my command; and then I got to demonstrative pronouns, and even the verb 'to eat.' But it was slow work, and the little people soon tired and wanted to get away from my interrogations, so I determined, rather of necessity, to let them give their lessons in little doses when they felt inclined. And very little doses I found they were before long, for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued.

CHAPTER V.

SUNSET.

"A queer thing I soon discovered about my little hosts, and that was their lack of interest. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishment, like children, but, like children, they would soon stop examining me, and wander away after some other toy. The dinner and my conversational beginnings ended, I noted for the first time that almost all those who had surrounded me at first were gone. It is odd, too, how speedily I came to disregard these little people. I went out through the portal into the sunlit world again as

soon as my hunger was satisfied. I was continually meeting more of these men of the future, who would follow me a little distance, chatter and laugh about me, and, having smiled and gesticulated in a friendly way, leave me again to my own devises.

"The calm of evening was upon the world as I emerged from the great hall, and the scene was lit by the warm glow of the setting sun. At first things were very confusing. Everything was so entirely different from the world I had known—even the flowers. The big building I had left was situated on the slope of a broad river valley, but the Thames had shifted, perhaps a mile from its present position. I resolved to mount to the summit of a crest, possibly a mile and a half away, from which I could get a wider view of this our planet in the year 802,701, A. D. For that, I should explain, was the date the little dials of my machine recorded.

"As I walked I was watchful of every impression that could possibly help to explain the condition of ruinous splendor in which I found the world—for ruinous it was. A little way up the hill, for instance, was a great heap of granite, bound together by masses of aluminum, a vast labyrinth of precipitous walls and crumbled heaps, amid which were thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants—nettles possibly, but wonderfully tinted with brown about the leaves, and incapable of stinging. It was evidently the derelict remains of some vast structure, built to what end I could not determine. It was here that I was destined, at a later date, to have a very strange experience—the first intimation of a still stranger discovery—but of that I will speak in its proper place.

"Looking round, with a sudden thought, from a terrace on which I had rested for a while, I realized that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently the

single house, and possibly even the household, had vanished. Here and there among the greenery were palace-like buildings, but the house and the cottage, which form such characteristic features of our own English landscape, had disappeared.

"'Communism,' said I to myself.

"And on the heels of that came another thought. I looked at the half dozen little figures that were following me. Then, in a flash, I perceived that all had the same form of costume, the same soft hairless visage, and the same girlish rotundity of limb. It may seem strange, perhaps, that I had not noticed this before. But everything was so strange. Now, I saw the fact plainly enough. In costume, and in all the differences of texture and bearing that now mark off the sex from each other, these people of the future were alike. And the children seemed to my eyes to be but the miniatures of their parents. I judged then that children of that time were extremely precocious, physically at least, and I found afterward abundant verification of my opinion.

"Seeing the ease and security in which these people were living, I felt that this close resemblance of the sexes was, after all, what one would expect; for the strength of a man and the softness of a woman, the institution of the family, and the differentiation of occupations are mere militant necessities of an age of physical force. Where population is balanced and abundant, much child-bearing becomes an evil rather than a blessing to the State; where violence comes but rarely and offspring are secure, there is less necessity—indeed there is no necessity—of an efficient family, and the specialization of the sexes with reference to their children's needs disappears. We see some beginnings of this even in our own time, and in this future age it was complete. This, I must remind you, was my speculation at the

time. Later, I was to appreciate how far it fell short of the reality.

"While I was musing upon these things, my attention was attracted by a pretty little structure, like a well under a cupola. I thought in a transitory way of the oddness of wells still existing, and then resumed the thread of my speculations. There were no large buildings toward the top of the hill, and as my walking powers were evidently miraculous, I was presently left alone for the first time. With a strange sense of freedom and adventure I pushed up to the crest.

"There I found a seat of some yellow metal that I did not recognize, corroded in places with a kind of pinkish rust and half smothered in soft moss, the arm rests cast and filed into the resemblance of griffins' heads. I sat down on it, and I surveyed the broad view of our old world under the sunset of that long day. It was as sweet and fair a view as I have ever seen. The sun had already gone below the horizon and the west was flaming gold, touched with some horizontal bars of purple and crimson. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay like a band of burnished steel. I have already spoken of the great palaces dotted about among the variegated scenery, some in ruins and some still occupied. Here and there rose a white or silvery figure in the waste garden of the earth, here and there came the sharp vertical line of some cupola or obelisk. There were no hedges, no signs of proprietary rights, no evidences of agriculture; the whole earth had become a garden.

"So watching, I began to put my interpretation upon the things I had seen, and as it shaped itself to me that evening, my interpretation was something in this way (afterward I found I had got only a half truth, or only a glimpse of one facet of the truth):

"It seemed to me that I had happened upon human-

ity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first time I began to realize an odd consequence of the social effort in which we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life —the true civilizing process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on to a climax. One triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed another. Things that are now mere dreams had become projects deliberately put in hand and carried forward. And the harvest was what I saw!

"After all, the sanitation and the agriculture of today are still in the rudimentary stage. The science of our time has attacked but a little department of the field of human disease, but, even so, it spreads its operations very steadily and persistently. Our agriculture and horticulture destroy just here and there a weed and cultivate perhaps a score or so of wholesome plants, leaving the greater number to fight out a balance as they can. We improve our favorite plants and animals —and how few they are—gradually by selective breeding; now a new and better peach, now a seedless grape, now a sweeter and larger flower, now a more convenient breed of cattle. We improve them gradually, because our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hands. Some day all this will be better organized, and still better. That is the drift of the current in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated and co-operating; things will move faster and faster toward the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs.

"This adjustment, I say, must have been done, and done well; done indeed for all time, in the space of Time across which my machine had leaped. The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventive medicine was attained. Diseases had been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And I shall have to tell you later that even the processes of putrefaction and decay had been profoundly affected by these changes.

"Social triumphs, too, had been effected. I saw mankind housed in splendid shelter, gloriously clothed, and as yet I had found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle. The shop, the advertisement, traffic, all that commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone. It was natural on that golden evening that I should jump at the idea of a social paradise.

"The difficulty of increasing population had been met, I guessed, and population had ceased to increase.

"But with this change in condition comes inevitably adaptations to the change. What, unless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human intelligence and vigor? Hardship and freedom; conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall; conditions that put a premium upon the loyal alliance of capable men, upon self-restraint, patience and decision. And the institution of the family, and the emotions that arise therein, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness for offspring, parental self-devotion, all found their justification and support in the imminent dangers of the young. Now, where are those imminent dangers? There is a sentiment arising, and it will grow, against connubial jealousy, against fierce maternity, against passion of all sorts;

unnecessary things now, and things that make us uncomfortable, savage survivals, discords in a refined and pleasant life.

"I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of intelligence, and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity had been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions.

"Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security, that restless energy, that with us is strength, would become weakness. Even in our own time certain tendencies and desires, once necessary to survival, are a constant source of failure. Physical courage and the love of battle, for instance, are no great help—may even be hindrances—to a civilized man. And in a state of physical balance and security, power, intellectual as well as physical, would be out of place. For countless years I judged there had been no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from wild beasts, no wasting disease to require strength of constitution, no need of toil. For such a life, what we should call the weak are as well equipped as the strong, are, indeed, no longer weak. Better equipped indeed they are, for the strong would be fretted by an energy for which there was no outlet. No doubt the exquisite beauty of the buildings I saw was the outcome of the last surgings of the now purposeless energy of mankind before it settled down into perfect harmony with the conditions under which it lived—the flourish of that triumph which began the last great peace. This has ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then comes languor and decay.

"Even this artistic impetus would at last die away—

had almost died in the Time I saw. To adorn themselves with flowers, to dance, to sing in the sunlight; so much was left of the artistic spirit, and no more. Even that would fade in the end into a contented inactivity. We are kept keen on the grindstone of pain and necessity, and it seemed to me that here was that hateful grindstone broken at last!

"As I stood there in the gathering dark I thought that in this simple explanation I had mastered the problem of the world—mastered the whole secret of these delicious people. Possibly the checks they had devised for the increase of population had succeeded too well, and their numbers had rather diminished than kept stationary. That would account for the abandoned ruins. Very simple was my explanation, and plausible enough—as most wrong theories are.

"As I stood there musing over this too perfect triumph of man, the full moon, yellow and gibbous, came up out of an overflow of silver light in the northeast. The bright little figures ceased to move about below, a noiseless owl flitted by, and I shivered with the chill of the night. I determined to descend and find where I could sleep.

"I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye traveled along to the figure of the white sphinx upon the pedestal of bronze, growing distinct as the light of the rising moon grew brighter. I could see the silver birch against it. There was the tangle of rhododendron bushes, black in the pale light, and there was the little lawn. I looked at the lawn again. A queer doubt chilled my complacency. 'No,' said I, stoutly, to myself, 'that was not the lawn.'

"But it was the lawn. For the white leprous face of the sphinx was toward it. Can you imagine what I felt as this conviction came home to me? But you cannot. The Time Machine was gone!

"At once, like a lash across the face, came the possibility of losing my own age, of being left helpless in this strange new world. The bare thought of it was an actual physical sensation. I could feel it grip me at the throat and stop my breathing.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MACHINE IS LOST.

"In another moment I was in a passion of fear, and running with great, leaping strides down the slope. Once I fell headlong and cut my face. I lost no time in stanching the blood, but jumped up and ran on, with a warm trickle down my cheek and chin. All the time I ran I was saying to myself: 'They have moved it a little—pushed it under the bushes out of the way.' Nevertheless, I ran with all my might. All the time, with the certainty that sometimes comes with excessive dread, I knew that such assurance was folly, knew instinctively that the machine was removed out of my reach.

"My breath came with pain. I suppose I covered the whole distance, from the hill crest to the little lawn, two miles, perhaps, in ten minutes. And I am not a young man. I cursed aloud as I ran at my confident folly in leaving the machine, wasting good breath thereby. I cried aloud, and none answered. Not a creature seemed to be stirring in that moonlit world.

"When I reached the lawn my worst fears were realized. Not a trace of the thing was to be seen. I felt faint and cold when I faced the empty space among the black tangle of bushes. I ran round it furiously, as if the thing might be hidden in a corner, and then

stopped abruptly with my hands clutching my hair. Above me towered the sphinx upon the bronze pedestal, white, shining, leprous in the light of the rising moon. It seemed to smile in mockery of my dismay.

"I might have consoled myself by imagining the little people had put the mechanism in some shelter for me, had not I felt assured of their physical and intellectual inadequacy. That is what dismayed me: the sense of some hitherto unsuspected power through whose intervention my invention had vanished. Yet of one thing I felt assured: unless some other age had produced its exact duplicate, the machine could not have moved in Time. The attachment of the levers—I will show you the method later—prevented anyone from tampering with it in that way when they were removed. It had been moved, and was hid, only in Space. But, then, where could it be?

"I think I must have had a kind of frenzy. I remember running violently in and out among the moonlit bushes all round the sphinx, and startling some white animal that in the dim light I took for a small deer. I remember, too, late that night, beating the bushes with my clenched fists until my knuckles were gashed and bleeding from the broken twigs.

"Then, sobbing and raving in my anguish of mind, I went down to the great building of stone. The big hall was dark, silent, and deserted. I slipped on the uneven floor and fell over one of the malachite tables, almost breaking my shin. I lit a match and went on past the dusty curtains of which I have told you.

"There I found a second great hall covered with cushions, upon which perhaps a score or so of the little people were sleeping. I have no doubt they found my second appearance strange enough, coming suddenly out of the quiet darkness with inarticulate noises and the splutter and flare of a match. For they had for-

gotten about matches. 'Where is my Time Machine?' I began, bawling like an angry child, laying hands upon them and shaking them up together. It must have been very queer to them. Some laughed, most of them looked sorely frightened. When I saw them standing round me, it came into my head that I was doing as foolish a thing as it was possible for me to do under the circumstances, in trying to revive the sensation of fear. For reasoning from the daylight behavior I thought that fear must be forgotten.

"Abruptly I dashed down the match, and, knocking one of the people over in my course, went blundering across the big dining-hall again out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running and stumbling this way and that. I do not remember all I did as the moon crept up the sky. I suppose it was the unexpected nature of my loss that maddened me. I felt hopelessly cut off from my own kind, a strange animal in an unknown world. I must have raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate. I have a memory of horrible fatigue, as the long night of despair wore away, of looking in this impossible place and that, of groping among moonlit ruins and touching strange creatures in the black shadows; at last, of lying on the ground near the sphinx and weeping with absolute wretchedness, even anger, at the folly of leaving the machine having leaked away with my strength. I had nothing left but misery.

"Then I slept, and when I woke again it was full day, and a couple of sparrows were hopping around me upon the turf within reach of my arm.

"I sat up in the freshness of the morning trying to remember how I had got there, and why I had such a profound sense of desertion and despair. Then things came clear in my mind. With the plain, reasonable daylight I could look my circumstances fairly

in the face. I saw the wild folly of my frenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself.

"'Suppose the worst,' said I, 'suppose the machine altogether lost—perhaps destroyed. It behooves me to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the people, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss and the means of getting materials and tools; so that in the end, perhaps, I may make another. That would be my only hope, a poor hope, perhaps, but better than despair. And, after all, it was a beautiful and curious world.

"'But probably the machine had only been taken away. Still, I must be calm and patient, find its hiding place, and recover it by force or cunning.' And with that I scrambled to my feet and looked about me, wondering where I could bathe. I felt weary, stiff, and travel-soiled. The freshness of the morning made me desire an equal freshness. I had exhausted my emotion. Indeed, as I went about my business, I found myself wondering at my intense excitement overnight.

"That morning I made a careful examination of the ground about the little lawn. I wasted some time in futile questionings conveyed as well as I was able to such of the little people as came by. They all failed to understand my gestures—some were simply stolid; some thought it was a jest, and laughed at me. I had the hardest task in the world to keep my hands off their pretty, laughing faces. It was a foolish impulse, but the devil begotten of fear and blind anger was ill curbed, and still eager to take advantage of my perplexity. The turf gave better counsel. I found a groove ripped in it, about midway between the pedestal of the sphinx and the marks of my feet, where, on arrival, I had struggled with the overturned machine. There were other signs of the removal of a heavy body about, of queer, narrow footprints like those I could

imagine made by a sloth. This directed my closer attention to the pedestal. It was, as I think I have said, of bronze. It was not a mere block, but highly decorated with deep-framed panels on either side. I went and rapped at these. The pedestal was hollow. Examining the panels with care, I found them discontinuous with the frames. There were no handles nor keyholes, but possibly the panels, if they were doors, as I supposed, opened from within. One thing was clear enough to my mind. It took no very great mental effort to infer that my Time Machine was inside that pedestal. But how it got there was a sufficient problem.

"I saw the heads of two orange-clad people coming through the bushes and under some blossom-covered apple trees toward me. I turned, smiling to them, and beckoned them to me. They came, and then, pointing to the bronze pedestal, I tried to intimate my wish to open it. But at my first gesture toward this, they behaved very oddly. I don't know how to convey their expression to you. Suppose you were to use a grossly improper gesture to a delicate-minded woman—it is how she would look. They went off as if they had received the last possible insult.

"However, I wanted access to the Time Machine; so I tried a sweet-looking little chap in white next, with exactly the same result. Somehow, his manner made me ashamed of myself. But, as I say, I wanted the Time Machine. I tried one more. As he turned off like the others, my temper got the better of me. In three strides I was after him, had him by the loose part of his robe round the neck, and began dragging him toward the sphinx. Then I saw the horror and repugnance of his face, and all of a sudden I let him go.

"But I was not beaten yet. I banged with my fist at

the bronze panels. I thought I heard something stir inside—to be explicit, I thought I heard a sound like a chuckle—but I must have been mistaken. Then I got a big pebble from the river, and came and hammered till I had flattened a coil in the decorations, and the verdegris came off in powdery flakes. The delicate little people must have heard me hammering in gusty outbreaks a mile away on either hand, but nothing came of it. I saw a crowd of them upon the slopes, looking furtively at me. At last, hot and tired, I sat down to watch the place. But I was too restless to watch long, and, besides, I am too Occidental for a long vigil. I could work at a problem for years, but to wait inactive for twenty-four hours—that is another matter.

"I got up after a time, and began walking aimlessly through the bushes toward the hill again.

"'Patience,' said I to myself. 'If you want your machine again, you must leave that sphinx alone. If they mean to take your machine away, it's little good your wrecking their bronze panels, and if they don't, you will get it back so soon as you can ask for it. To sit among all those unknown things before a puzzle like that is hopeless. That way lies monomania. Face this world. Learn its ways; watch it; be careful of too hasty guessing at its meaning. In the end you will find clews to it all.

"Then suddenly the humor of the situation came into my mind: the thought of the years I had spent in study and toil to get into the future age, and now my passion of anxiety to get out of it. I had made myself the most complicated and the most hopeless trap that ever a man devised. Although it was at my own expense, I could not help myself. I laughed aloud.

"Going through the big palace it seemed to me that the little people avoided me. It may have been my

fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze. Yet I felt tolerably sure of the avoidance. I was careful, however, to show no concern, and to abstain from any pursuit of them, and in the course of a day or two things got back to the old footing.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STRANGE ANIMAL.

I made what progress I could in the language, and in addition I pushed my explorations here and there. Either I missed some subtle point or their language was excessively simple, almost exclusively composed of concrete substantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if any, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to convey or understand any but the simplest propositions. I determined to put the thought of my Time Machine, and the mystery of the bronze doors under the sphinx, as much as possible in a corner of my memory until my growing knowledge would lead me back to them in a natural way. Yet a certain feeling you may understand tethered me in a circle of a few miles round the point of my arrival.

"So far as I could see, all the world displayed the same richness as the Thames valley. From every hill I climbed I saw the same abundance of splendid buildings, endlessly varied in material and style, the same clustering thickets of evergreens, the same blossom-laden trees and tree ferns. Here and there water shone like silver, and beyond, the land rose in blue undulating hills and so faded into the serenity of the sky.

"A peculiar feature that presently attracted my attention was certain circular wells that appeared to sink to a profound depth. One lay by the path up the hill which I had followed during my first walk. These wells were rimmed with bronze, curiously wrought, and often protected by small cupolas from the rain. Sitting by the side of these, and peering down, I failed to see any gleam of water, and could catch no reflection from a lighted match. I heard a peculiar dull sound; thud, thud, thud, like the beating of some big engine, and I discovered from the flaring of the match that a steady current of air set down the shaft.

"Moreover, I carelessly threw a scrap of paper into the throat of the well, and instead of fluttering slowly down, it was at once sucked swiftly out of sight. After a time, too, I came to connect with these wells certain tall towers that stood here and there upon the hill slopes. Above these there was often apparent a peculiar flicker of air, much as one sees it on a hot day above a sun-scorched beach.

"Putting these things together there certainly seemed to me a strong suggestion of an extensive system of subterraneous ventilation, though its true import was difficult to imagine. I was at first inclined to associate it with the sanitary apparatus of these people. It was the obvious suggestion of these things, but it was absolutely wrong.

"And here I must admit that I learned very little of drains, and bells, and modes of conveyance and the like conveniences during my time in this real future. In some of the fictitious visions of Utopias and coming times I have read, there is a vast amount of detail about building construction and social arrangements and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whole world lies in one's imagination, they are altogether inaccessible to a real traveler amid

such realities as surrounded me. Conceive what tale of London a negro from Central Africa would take back to his tribe. What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and telegraph wires, of the parcels delivery company, and postal orders? And yet we at least would be willing enough to explain these things. And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untraveled friend believe? Then think how little is the gap between a negro and a man of our times, and how wide the interval between myself and the Golden Age people. I was sensible of much that was unseen, and which contributed to my comfort, but save for a general impression of automatic organization, I fear I can convey very little of the difference to your minds.

"In the matter of sepulcher, for instance, I could see no traces of crematoria or anything suggestive of tombs. But it occurred to me that possibly cemeteries or crematoria existed at some spot beyond the range of my explorations. This again was a question I deliberately put to myself, and upon which my curiosity was at first entirely defeated. Neither were there any old or infirm among them.

"I must confess that my satisfaction with my first theories at an automatic civilization and a decadent humanity did not endure. Yet I could think of none other. Let me put my difficulties. The several big palaces I had explored were mere living places, great dining-halls and sleeping apartments. I could find no machinery, no appliances of any kind. Yet these people were clothed in pleasant fabrics that must at times need renewal, their sandals, though without ornament, were fairly complex specimens of mental work. Somehow such things must be made. And the little people displayed no vestige of the creative tendencies of our time. There were no shops, no workshops, no in-

dications of importations from any other part of the earth. They spent all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half playful fashion, in eating fruit, and sleeping. I could not see how things were kept going.

"Then again about the Time Machine. Something, I knew not what, had taken it into the hollow pedestal of the sphinx. Why? For the life of me I could not imagine.

"Then there were those wells without water, those flickering pillars. I felt I missed a clew somewhere. I felt—how shall I say it? Suppose you found an inscription with sentences here and there in excellent plain English, and interpolated there with others made up of words, even of letters, absolutely unknown to you. That was how the world of 802,701 presented itself to me on the third day of my stay.

"On that day, too, I made a friend—of a sort. It happened that as I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow of the river, one of them was seized with cramp and began drifting down stream. The main current of the stream ran rather swiftly there, but not too swiftly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange want of ideas of these people, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly, crying little creature who was drowning before their eyes.

"When I realized this I hurriedly slipped off my garments, and wading in from a point lower down, caught the poor little soul and brought her to land.

"A little rubbing of the limbs soon brought her round, and I had the satisfaction of seeing that she was all right before I left her. I had got to such a low estimate of these little folks that I did not expect gratitude. In that, however, I was wrong.

"The incident happened in the morning. In the afternoon I met my little woman, as I believe it was, when I was returning toward my center from one of my explorations, and she received me with cries of delight and presented me with a big garland of flowers—evidently prepared for me.

"The action took my imagination. Very possibly I had been feeling desolate. At any rate I did my best to display my appreciation of the gift.

"We were soon seated together in a little stone arbor, engaged in a conversation that was chiefly smiles.

"The little creature's friendliness affected me exactly as a child might. We passed each other flowers and she kissed my hands. I did the same to hers. Then I tried conversation and found out her name was Weena, which, though I don't know what it meant, somehow seemed appropriate enough. That was the beginning of a queer friendship that lasted altogether a week and ended—as I will tell you.

"She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always. She tried to follow me everywhere, and it went to my heart to tire her out upon my next exploration and leave her behind at last exhausted, and calling after me rather plaintively. But the problems of the world had to be mastered. I had not, I said to myself, come into the future to carry on a miniature flirtation. Yet her distress when I left her was very great, her expostulations at the parting sometimes frantic, and I think altogether I had as much trouble as comfort from her affection. And yet she was, somehow, a very great comfort.

"I thought it was mere childish affection that made her cling to me. Until it was too late, I did not clearly know what I had inflicted upon her when I left her. Nor, until it was too late, did I clearly understand what she was to me. For the little doll of a creature,

by merely seeming fond of me and showing in her weak, futile way that she cared for me, presently gave my return to the neighborhood of the white sphinx, almost the feeling of coming home. I would watch for her little figure of white and gold so soon as I came over the hill.

"It was from her, too, that I learned that fear had not altogether left the world. She was fearless enough in the daylight, and she had the oddest confidence in me—for once in a foolish moment I made threatening grimaces at her, and she simply laughed at them. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was the one fearful thing. It was a singularly passionate dread, and it set me thinking and observing. I discovered then, among other things, that these little people gathered into the great houses after dark, and slept a number together. To enter upon them without a light was to put them into a tumult of apprehension. I never found one out of doors or one sleeping alone within doors after dark.

"Yet I was still such a blockhead that I missed the lesson of that fear, and in spite of Weena's evident distress insisted upon sleeping away from these slumbering heaps of humanity. It troubled her greatly, but usually her odd affection for me triumphed, and for five of the nights of our acquaintance, including the last night of all, she slept with her head pillowed beside mine. But my story slips away from me as I speak of her.

"It must have been on the night before I rescued Weena that I woke up about dawn. I had been restless, dreaming most disagreeably that I was drowned and that sea anemones were feeling over my face with their soft palps. I awoke with a start, and with an odd fancy that some grayish animal had just rushed out of the chamber in which I slept.

"I tried to get to sleep again, but I felt restless and uncomfortable. It was that dim, gray hour when things are just creeping out of the darkness, when everything is colorless and clear cut and yet unreal. I got up and went down into the great hall and out upon the flagstones in front of the palace. I thought I would make a virtue of necessity and see the sunrise.

"The moon was setting, and the dying moonlight and first pallor of dawn mingled together in a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inky black, the ground a somber gray, the sky colorless and cheerless. And up the hill slope I thought I saw ghosts. Three several times as I scanned the slope I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white ape-like creature running rather quickly up the hill, and once near the ruins I saw a group of two carrying some dark body. They moved hastily. I did not see what became of them. It seemed that they vanished among the bushes.

"The dawn was still indistinct, you must understand. I was feeling that chill, uncertain, early morning feeling you may have experienced. I doubted my eyes. As the eastern sky grew brighter and the light of the day increased, and vivid coloring came back to the world once more, I scanned the view keenly, but I saw no confirmation of my white figures. They were mere creatures of the half-light.

"'They must have been ghosts,' said I; 'I wonder whence they dated.'

"For a queer notion of Grant Allen's came into my head and amused me. If each generation dies and leaves ghosts, he argues, the world at last will get overcrowded with them. On that theory they would have become very thick in eight hundred thousand years from now, and it was no great wonder to see four at once. But the jest was unsatisfactory, and I was

thinking of these figures all the morning until the rescue of Weena drove the subject out of my head. I associated them in some indefinite way with the white animal I had startled in my first passionate search for the Time Machine. But Weena was a pleasant substitute for such a topic.

"These ghostly shapes were soon destined to take possession of my mind in a far more vivid fashion. I think I have said how much hotter than our own was the weather of this future age. I cannot account for it. It may be the sun was hotter, or else the earth was nearer the sun. It is usual to assume that the sun will go on cooling steadily in the future, but people unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin, forget that the planets must ultimately, one by one, fall back into the parent body. As these catastrophies occur the sun will blaze out again with renewed energy. It may be that some inner planet had suffered this fate. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the sun was very much hotter than it is now.

"It was one very hot morning, my fourth morning, I think, as I was seeking a refuge from the heat and glare in a colossal ruin near the great house where I sheltered, that this remarkable incident occurred. Clambering among these heaps of masonry, I found a long narrow gallery, the end and side windows of which were blocked by fallen masses of masonry and which by contrast with the brilliance outside seemed at first impenetrably dark to me.

"I entered it groping, for the change from light to blackness made spots of color swim before me. Suddenly I halted spell-bound. A pair of eyes, luminous by reflection against the daylight without, was watching me out of the obscurity.

"The old instinctive dread of wild animals came upon

me. I clenched my hands and steadfastly looked into the glaring eyeballs. I feared to turn. Then the thought of the absolute security in which humanity appeared to be living came to my mind. Then I remembered that strange dread of the dark.

"Overcoming my fear to some extent, I advanced a step and spoke. I will admit that my voice was hoarse and ill controlled. I put out my hand, and touched something soft.

"At once the eyes darted sideways, and something white ran past me. I turned, with my heart in my mouth, and saw a queer, little ape-like figure, with the head held down in a peculiar manner, running across the sunlit space behind me. It blundered against a block of granite, staggered aside, and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow beneath another pile of ruined masonry.

"My impression of it was, of course, very imperfect. It was of a dull white color, and had strange, large grayish-red eyes. There was some flaxen hair on its head and down its back. But, as I say, it went too fast for me to see distinctly. I cannot even say whether it ran on all fours, or only with its fore arms held very low.

"After a momentary hesitation I followed the creature into the second heap of ruins. I could not find it there at first, but after a time, in the profound obscurity, I came upon one of those round, well-like openings, of which I have told you, half-closed by a fallen pillar. A sudden thought came to me. Could the thing have vanished down the shaft? I lit a match, and, looking down, saw a small, white moving figure, with large, bright eyes, that regarded me steadfastly as it retreated.

"The thing made me shudder. It was so like a human spider. It was clambering down the wall of the

shaft, and now I noticed for the first time a number of metal projections for foot and hand, forming a kind of ladder down.

"Suddenly the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped; and when I had lit another, the little monster had disappeared.

"I do not know how long I sat peering down the portentous well. Very slowly could I persuade myself that the thing I had seen was a man. But gradually the real truth dawned upon me; that man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals; that my graceful children of the upperworld were not the only descendants of the men of my generation, but that this bleached, nocturnal thing that had flashed before me, was also heir to our age.

"I thought of the flickering pillars, and of my theory of an underground ventilation. I began to suspect their true import.

"But what was this creature doing in my scheme of a perfectly balanced organization? How was it related to the indolent serenity of the beautiful overworld people? And what was hidden down below there? I sat upon the edge of the well, telling myself I had nothing to fear in descending, and that there I must go for the solution of my difficulties, and withal I was absolutely afraid to go down.

"As I hesitated, two of the beautiful upperworld people came running in their amorous sport, across the daylight into the shadow. One pursued the other, flinging flowers at her as he ran. They seemed disappointed when they found me with my arm against the overturned pillar, peering down the well. Apparently, it was considered bad form to notice these apertures, for when I pointed to it, and tried to frame a question about it in their tongue, they seemed distressed,

and turned away. They were, however, interested by my matches, and I struck several to amuse them.

"However, all my attempts to woo them toward the subject I wanted failed; and presently I left them. I resolved to go back to Weena, and see what I could get from her.

"But my mind was already in revolution, my guesses and impressions slipping and sliding to a new adjustment. I had now the clew to these wells, to the ventilating towers, to the problem of the ghosts, and a hint, indeed, of the meaning of the bronze gates and the fate of the Time Machine. Vaguely, indeed, there came a suggestion toward the economic problem that had puzzled me.

"Here was the new view: Evidently this second species of man was subterranean. There were three circumstances in particular that made me think its rare emergence upon the surface was the outcome of long subterraneous habit. In the first place, the bleached appearance, common in most animals that live largely in the dark—the white fish of the Kentucky caves, for instance. Then the large eyes and their capacity for reflecting the light—a common feature of nocturnal eyes, witness the owl and the cat. And finally, the evident confusion in the sunlight, the hasty flight toward dark shadow, and the carriage of the head while in the light, re-enforced the idea of an extremely sensitive retina.

"Beneath my feet, then, the earth must be tunneled out to an enormous extent, and in these caverns the new race lived. The presence of ventilating shafts and wells all along the hill slopes—everywhere, in fact, except along the river valley—showed how universally the ramifications of the underworld extended.

"And it was natural to assume that it was in the underworld that the necessary work of the overworld

was performed. This was so plausible that I accepted it unhesitatingly. From that I went on to assume how the splitting of the human species came about. I dare say you will anticipate what shape my theory took, though I soon felt it was still short of the truth of the case.

"But at first, starting from the problems of our own age, it seemed as clear as daylight to me that the gradual widening of the present merely temporary and social difference of the capitalist from the laborer was the key to the explanation. No doubt it will seem grotesque enough to you and wildly incredible, and yet even now there are circumstances that point in the way things have gone. There is a tendency plainly enough to utilize underground space for the less ornamental purposes of civilization; there is the Metropolitan Railway in London, for instance, and all these new electric railways; there are subways, and underground workrooms, restaurants, and so forth. Evidently, I thought, this tendency had increased until industry had gradually lost sight of the day, going into larger and larger underground factories, in which the workers would spend an increasing amount of their time. Even now, an East End worker lives in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth and the clear sky altogether.

"Then again, the exclusive tendency of richer people, due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor, is already leading to the closing of considerable portions of the surface of the country against these latter. About London, for instance, perhaps half the prettier country is shut up from such intrusion. And the same widening gulf, due to the length and expense of the higher educational process and the increased facilities for, and temp-

tation toward, forming refined habits among the rich, will make that frequent exchange between class and class, that promotion and intermarriage which at present retards the splitting of our species along the lines of social stratification, less and less frequent.

"So, in the end, you would have above ground the Haves, pursuing health, comfort, and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots; the workers, getting continually adapted to their labor. No doubt, once they were below ground, considerable rents would be charged for the ventilation of their caverns. Workers who struck work would starve or be suffocated for arrears of ventilator rent; workers who were so constituted as to be miserable and rebellious would die. In the end, if the balance was held permanent, the survivors would become as well adapted to the conditions of their subterranean life as the overworld people were to theirs, and as happy in their way. It seemed to me that the refined beauty of the overworld, and the etiolated pallor of the lower, followed naturally enough.

"The great triumph of humanity I had dreamed of now took a different shape in my mind. It had been no triumph of universal education and general cooperation, such as I had imagined at the first. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working out to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. The triumph of the overworld humanity had not been simply a triumph over nature, but a triumph over nature and their fellow-men.

"I must warn you this was my theory at the time. I had no convenient Cicerone on the pattern of the Utopian books. My explanation may be absolutely wrong. I still think it the most plausible one. But even on this supposition the balanced civilization that was at last attained must have long since passed its zenith, and was now far gone in decay. The too per-

fect security of the overworld had led these to a slow movement of degeneration at last—to a general dwindling of size, strength and intelligence. That I already saw clearly enough, but what had happened to the lower world I did not yet suspect. Yet, from what I had seen of the Morlocks—that, by the bye, was the name by which these creatures were called—I could imagine the modification of the human type was far more pronounced in the underworld than among the Eloi, the beautiful races that I already knew.

"Then came some troublesome doubts. Why had the Morlocks taken my Time Machine? For I felt sure these underpeople had taken it. Why, too, if the Eloi were masters, could they not restore the thing to me? And why were the Eloi so afraid of the dark?

"I determined, as I have said, to question Weena about this underworld, but here again I was disappointed. At first she would not understand my questions, and then she refused to answer. She shivered, as though the topic was unendurable. And when I pressed her, perhaps a little harshly, she burst into tears.

"They were the only tears I ever saw in that future age, except my own. When I saw them I ceased abruptly to trouble about the Morlocks, and was only concerned in driving these signs of her human inheritance out of her eyes again. And presently she was smiling and clapping her hands while I solemnly burnt a match.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MORLOCKS.

"It may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could follow up the clew of these Morlocks in what

was manifestly the proper way, and descend into the well. I felt a peculiar shrinking from their pallid bodies. They were just the half-bleached color of the worms and things one sees preserved in spirit in a zoological museum. And they were cold to the touch. Probably my shrinking was largely due to the sympathetic influence of the Eloi, whose disgust of the Morlocks I now began to appreciate.

"The next night I did not sleep very well. Possibly my health was a little disordered. I was oppressed with doubt and perplexity. Once or twice I had a feeling of intense fear for which I could perceive no definite reason. I remember creeping noiselessly into the great hall where the little people were sleeping in the moonlight—that night it was that Weena was among them—and feeling reassured by their presence. It occurred to me even then that when in the course of a few days the moon passed through its last quarter and the nights became dark, the appearance of these unpleasant creatures from below, these whitened Lemurs, these new vermin that had replaced the old, might be more abundant.

"On both these days I had the restless feeling of one who shirks an inevitable duty. I felt assured that the Time Machine was only to be recovered by boldly penetrating these subterranean mysteries. Yet I could not face it. If I had only had a companion it would have been different. But I was so horribly alone, and even to clamber down into the darkness of the well appalled me.

"I don't know if you will understand my feeling, but I never felt quite safe at my back.

"It was this restless feeling, perhaps, that drove me further than I had hitherto gone in my exploring expeditions. Going to the southwestward toward the rising country that is now called Combe Wood, I ob-

served far off, in the direction of nineteenth century Banstead, a vast green pile, of a different character from any I had hitherto seen. It was larger than even the largest of the palaces or ruins I knew, and the façade appeared to me Oriental in its character. The face of it had the luster as well as the pale green tint, a kind of bluish green, of a certain type of Chinese porcelain. The difference in appearance in the building suggested a difference in its use. I was minded to push on and explore it. But the day was growing late and I had come upon the sight of the place after a long and tiring circuit. I resolved to postpone this examination for the following day, and returned to the welcome and caresses of little Weena.

"But the next morning I was in a mood of remorse for my hesitation in descending the well and facing the Morlocks in their caverns. I perceived my curiosity regarding this great pile of Green Porcelain was a mere self-deception to shirk the experience I dreaded by another day. I resolved I would make the descent without further waste of time, and started out in the early morning toward a well near the ruins of granite and aluminum.

"Little Weena ran by my side. She followed me to the well dancing, but when she saw me lean over the mouth and look downward, she seemed strangely disconcerted.

"'Good-by, little Weena,' said I, kissing her, and then putting her down, I began to feel over the parapet for the climbing hooks—rather hastily, for I feared my courage might leak away.

"At first Weena watched me in amazement, and then she gave me a most piteous cry, and running to me began to pull at me with her little hands. I think her opposition nerved me rather to proceed. I shook her

off, perhaps a little roughly, and in another moment I was in the throat of the well.

"I saw her agonized face over the parapet, and smiled to reassure her. Then I had to look down at the unstable hooks by which I hung.

"I had to clamber down a shaft of perhaps two hundred yards. The descent was effected by means of metallic bars projecting from the sides of the well, and since they were adapted to the needs of a creature much smaller and lighter than myself, I was speedily cramped and fatigued by the descent. And not simply fatigued. My weight suddenly bent one of the hooks and almost swung me off it down into the blackness beneath.

"For a moment I hung by one hand, and after that experience I did not dare to rest again, and though my arms and back were presently acutely painful, I continued to clamber with as quick a motion as possible down the sheer descent. Glancing upward I saw the aperture, a mere small blue disk above me, in which a star was visible, and little Weena's head appeared as a round, black projection. The thudding sound of some machine below me grew louder and more oppressive. Everything save that minute circle above was profoundly dark. When I looked up again Weena had disappeared.

"I was in an agony of discomfort. I had some thought of trying to go up the shaft again, and leave the underworld alone. But while I turned this over in my mind I continued to descend.

"It was with intense relief that I saw dimly coming up a foot to the right of me, a slender loophole in the wall of the shaft, and swinging myself in, found it was the aperture of a narrow, horizontal tunnel in which I could lie down and rest.

"It was not too soon. My arms ached, my back was cramped, and I was trembling with the prolonged

fear of falling. Besides this, the unbroken darkness had had a distressing effect upon my eyes. The air was full of the throbbing and hum of the machinery that pumped the air down the shaft.

"I do not know how long I lay in that tunnel. I was roused by a soft hand touching my face. Starting up in the darkness, I snatched at my matches, and hastily striking one, saw three grotesque, white creatures, similar to the one I had seen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the light. Living as they did in what appeared to me impenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the eyes of the abyssmal fishes or of any purely nocturnal creatures, and they reflected the light in the same way. I have no doubt they could see me in that rayless obscurity, and they did not seem to have any fear of me apart from the light. But so soon as I struck a match in order to see them, they fled incontinently, vanishing up dark gutters and tunnels from which their eyes glared at me in the strangest fashion.

"I tried to call to them, but what language they had was apparently a different one from that of the overworld people. So that I was needs left to my own unaided exploration. The thought of flight rather than exploration was even at that time in my mind.

"'You are in for it now,' said I to myself, and went on.

"Feeling my way along this tunnel of mine, the confused noise of machinery grew louder, and presently the walls fell away from me and I came to a large, open space, and striking another match I saw I had entered a vast arched cavern extending into darkness, at last, beyond the range of my light.

"The view I had of this cavern was as much as one could see in the burning of a match. Necessarily my memory of it is very vague. Great shapes like big ma-

chines rose out of the dim and threw grotesque black shadows, in which the spectral Morlocks sheltered from the glare. The place, by the bye, was very stuffy and oppressive, and the faint halitus of freshly shed blood was in the tir. Some way down the central vista was a little table of white metal upon which a meal seemed to be spread. The Morlocks, at any rate, were carnivorous. Even at the time I remember thinking what large animal could have survived to furnish the red joint I saw. It was all very indistinct, the heavy smell, the big, unmeaning shapes, the white figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiting for the darkness to come at me again. Then the match burned down and stung my fingers and fell, a wriggling red spot in the black.

"I have thought since how particularly ill equipped I was. When I had started with the Time Machine I had started with the absurd assumption that the men of the future would certainly be infinitely in front of us in all their appliances. I had come without arms, without medicine, without anything to smoke—at times I missed tobacco frightfully—even without enough matches. If I had only thought of a kodak! I could have flashed that glimpse of the underworld in a second and examined it at leisure. But as it was, I stood there with only the weapons and powers that Nature had endowed me with—hands, feet, and teeth—except four safety matches that still remained to me.

"I was afraid to push my way in among all this machinery in the dark, and it was only with my last glimpse of light I discovered that my store of matches had run low. It had never occurred to me until that moment that there was any need to economize them, and I had wasted almost half the box in astonishing the aboveground people, to whom fire was a novelty. As I say, I had four left.

"Then while I stood in the dark a hand touched mine;

then some lank fingers came feeling over my face. I was sensible of a dull, unpleasant odor. I fancy I detected the breathing of a number of those little beings about me. I felt the box of matches in my hand being gently disengaged, and other hands behind me plucking at my clothing.

"The sense of these unseen creatures examining me was indescribably unpleasant. The sudden realization of my ignorance of their ways of thinking and possible actions came home to me very vividly in the darkness. I shouted at them as loudly as I could. They started away from me, and then I could feel them approaching me again. They clutched at me more boldly, whispering odd sounds to each other. I shivered violently and shouted again, rather discordantly. This time they were not so seriously alarmed and made a queer laughing noise as they came toward me again.

"I will confess I was horribly frightened. I determined to strike another match and escape under its glare. Eking it out with a scrap of paper from my pocket, I made good my retreat to the narrow tunnel. But hardly had I entered this when my light was blown out, and I could hear them in the blackness rustling like wind among leaves and pattering like the rain, as they hurried after me.

"In a moment I was clutched by several hands again, and there was no mistake now that they were trying to draw me back. I struck another light and waved it in their dazzled faces. You can scarcely imagine how nauseatingly inhuman those pale, chinless faces and great, lidless, pinkish-gray eyes seemed, as they stared stupidly, evidently blinded by the light.

"So I gained time and retreated again, and when my second match had ended struck my third. That had almost burned through as I reached the opening of the tunnel upon the well. I lay down on the edge, for the

throbbing whirl of the air-pumping machine below made me giddy, and felt sideways for the projecting hooks. As I did so my feet were grasped from behind and I was violently tugged backward. I lit my last match—and it incontinently went out. But I had my hand on the climbing bars now, and kicking violently, disengaged myself from the clutches of the Morlocks, and was speedily clambering up the shaft again.

"They remained peering and blinking up the shaft, except one little wretch who followed me for some way, and, indeed, well-nigh captured my boot as a trophy.

"That upward climb seemed unending. While I still had the last twenty or thirty feet of it above me, a deadly nausea came over me. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping my hold. The last few yards was a frightful struggle against this faintness. Several times my head swam and I felt all the sensations of falling.

"At last I got over the well mouth somehow and staggered out of the ruin into the blinding sunlight. I fell upon my face. Even the soil seemed sweet and clean.

"Then I remember Weena kissing my hands and ears, and the voices of others of the Elio. Then probably I was insensible for a time.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN THE NIGHT CAME.

"Now, indeed, I seemed to be in a worse case than before. Hitherto, except during my night's anguish at the loss of the Time Machine, I had felt a sustaining hope of ultimate escape, but my hope was staggered by these new discoveries. Hitherto, I had merely

thought myself impeded by the childish simplicity of the little people and by some unknown forces which I had only to understand in order to overcome. But there was an altogether new element in the sickening quality of the Morlocks, something inhuman and malign. Instinctively I loathed them. Before, I had felt as a man might feel who had fallen into a pit; my concern was with the pit and how to get out again. But now I felt like a beast in a trap, whose enemy would presently come.

"The enemy I dreaded may surprise you. It was the darkness of the new moon. Weena had put this into my head by some, at first, incomprehensible remarks about the Dark Nights. It was not now such a very difficult problem to guess what the coming Dark Nights might mean. The moon was on the wane; each night there was a longer interval of darkness. And I now understood, to some slight degree, at least, the reason of the fear of the little upperworld people for the dark. I wondered vaguely what foul villainy it might be that the Morlocks did under the darkness of the new moon.

"Whatever the origin of the existing conditions, I felt pretty sure now that my second hypothesis was all wrong. The upperworld people might once have been the favored aristocracy of the world, and the Morlocks their mechanical servants, but that state of affairs had passed away long since. The two species that had resulted from the evolution of man were sliding down toward, or had already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carlovingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on sufferance, since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the daylit surface unendurable. And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and

maintained them in their habitual need, perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service. They did it, as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a man enjoys killing animals in sport—because ancient and departed necessities had impressed it on the organism. But clearly the old order was already in part reversed. The Nemesis of the delicate ones was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousands of generations ago, man had thrust his brother man out of the ease and sunlight of life. And now that brother was coming back—changed. Already the Eloi had begun to learn one old lesson anew. They were becoming acquainted with Fear.

"Then suddenly came into my head the memory of the meat I had seen in the underworld. It seemed odd how this memory floated into my mind, not stirred up, as it were, by the current of my meditations, but coming in almost like a question from outside. I tried to recall the form of it. I had a vague sense of something familiar, but at that time I could not tell what it was.

"Still, however helpless the little people might be in the presence of their mysterious Fear, I was differently constituted. I came out of this age of ours, this ripe prime of the human race, when fear does not paralyze and mystery has lost its terrors. I at least would defend myself. Without further delay I determined to make myself arms, and a fastness where I might sleep with some security. From that refuge as a base I could face the strange world with some confidence again, a confidence I had lost now that I realized to what uncanny creatures I nightly lay exposed. I felt I could never sleep again until my bed was secure from them. I shuddered with horror to think how they must already have examined me during my sleep.

"I wandered during the afternoon along the valley

of the Thames, but found nothing that commended itself to my mind as a sufficiently inaccessible retiring place. All the buildings and trees seemed easily practicable to such dexterous climbers as the Morlocks—to judge by their wells—must be. Then the tall pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain, and the polished gleam of its walls, came back to my memory, and in the evening, taking Weena like a child upon my shoulder, I went up the hills toward the southwest.

"Now the distance I had reckoned was seven or eight miles, but it must have been nearer eighteen. I had first seen the Palace on a moist afternoon when distances are deceptively diminished. In addition, the heel of one of my shoes was loose, and a nail was working through the sole—they were comfortable old shoes I wear about indoors—so that I was lame. It was already long past sunset before I came in sight of the Palace, standing out in black silhouette against the pale yellow of the sky.

"Weena had been hugely delighted when first I carried her, but after a time she desired me to let her down and ran along by the side of me, occasionally darting off on either hand to pick flowers to stick in my pockets. My pockets had always puzzled Weena, but at the last she had concluded they were an eccentric kind of vases for floral decoration. At least she utilized them for that purpose.

"And that reminds me! As I changed my jacket I found——"

(The Time Traveler paused, put his hand into his pocket, and silently placed two withered flowers, not unlike very large white mallows, upon the little table. Then he resumed his narrative.)

"As the hush of evening crept over the world and we proceeded over the hill crest toward Wimbledon, Weena became tired and wanted to return to the house

of gray stone. But I pointed out the distant pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain to her, and contrived to make her understand that we were seeking a refuge there from her Fear.

"You know that great pause that comes upon things before the dusk. Even the breeze stops in the trees. There is to me always an air of expectation about that evening stillness. The sky was clear, remote, and empty, save for a few horizontal bars far down in the sunset.

"That night the expectation took the color of my fears. In the darkling calm my senses seemed preternaturally sharpened. I fancied I could even feel the hollowness of the ground beneath my feet, could indeed almost see through it, the Morlocks in their ant hill going hither and thither and waiting for the dark. In this excited state I fancied that they would take my invasion of their burrows as a declaration of war. And why had they taken my Time Machine?

"So we went on in the quiet, and the twilight deepened into night. The clear blue of the distance faded and one star after another came out. The ground grew dim and the trees black. Weena's fears and her fatigue grew upon her. I took her in my arms and talked to her and caressed her. Then as the darkness grew profounder she put her arms around my neck, and closing her eyes tightly, pressed her face against my shoulder.

"We went down a long slope into a valley, and there in the dimness I almost walked into a little river. This I waded, and went up the opposite side of the valley, past a number of sleeping houses, and by a statue that appeared to me in the indistinct light to represent a faun, or some such figure, minus the head. Here, too, were acacias. So far, I had seen nothing of the Mor-

locks, but it was yet early in the night, and the darker hours before the old moon rose were still to come.

"From the brow of the next hill I saw a thick wood spreading wide and black before me. At this I hesitated. I could see no end to it, either to the right or to the left. Feeling tired—my feet, in particular, were very sore—I carefully lowered Weena from my shoulder as I halted, and sat down upon the turf. I could no longer see the Palace of Green Porcelain, and I was in doubt of my direction.

"I looked into the thickness of the wood, and thought of what it might hide. Under that dense tangle of branches one would be out of sight of the stars. Even were there no other lurking danger there—a danger I did not care to let my imagination loose upon—there would still be all the roots to stumble over, and the tree boles to strike myself against. I was very tired, too, after the excitements of the day, and I decided that I would not face it, but would pass the night upon the open hill.

"Weena, I was glad to discover, was fast asleep. I carefully wrapped her in my jacket, and sat down beside her to wait for the moonrise. The hillside upon which I sat was quiet and deserted, but from the black of the wood there came now and then a stir of living things.

"Above me shone the stars, for the night was clear. I felt a certain sense of friendly comfort in their twinkling. All the old constellations had gone from the sky, however, for that slow movement that is imperceptible in a dozen human lifetimes had long ago rearranged them in unfamiliar groupings. But the Milky Way, it seemed to me, was still the same tattered streamer of star dust as of yore. Southward—as I judged it—was a very bright red star that was new to me. It was even more splendid than our own green Sirius. Amid all these scintillating points of light,

one planet shone kindly and steadily like the face of an old friend.

"Looking at the stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of the great processional cycle that the pole of the earth describes in the heavens. Only forty times had that silent revolution occurred during all the years I had traversed. And during those few revolutions, all the activity, all the traditions, the carefully planned organizations, the nations, languages, literature, aspirations, even the mere memory of man as I knew man, had been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who had forgotten their high ancestry, and the white animals of which I went in fear. Then I thought of the great fear there was between these two species, and for the first time, with a sudden shiver, came the clear knowledge of what the meat I had seen might be. Yet it was too horrible! I looked at little Weena sleeping beside me, her face white and starlike under the stars, and forthwith dismissed the thought from my mind.

"Through that long night I kept my mind off the Morlocks as well as I could, and whiled away the time by trying to fancy I could find traces of the old constellations among the new confusion. The sky kept very clear, except a hazy cloud or so. No doubt I dozed at times. Then, as my vigil wore on, came a faintness in the eastward sky like the reflection of some colorless fire, and the old moon rose thin and peaked and white. And close behind and overtaking it and overflowing it the dawn came, pale at first and then growing pink and warm.

"No Morlocks had approached us. Indeed, I had seen none upon the hill that night. And in the confidence of renewed day it almost seemed to me that my fear had been unreasonable. I stood up, and found my

foot with the loose heel swollen at the ankle and painful under the heel. I sat down again, took off my shoes, and flung them away.

"I awakened Weena, and forthwith we went down into the wood, now green and pleasant, instead of black and forbidding. And there we found some fruit wherewith to break our fast. We soon met others of the dainty ones, laughing and dancing in the sunlight, as though there were no such thing in nature as the night.

"Then I thought once more of the meat that I had seen. I felt assured now of what it was, and, from the bottom of my heart, I pitied this last feeble rill from the great flood of humanity. Clearly, somewhere in the long ages of human decay, the food of the Morlocks had run short. Possibly they had lived on rats and such like vermin. Even now, man is far less discriminating and exclusive in his food than he was, far less than any monkey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct. And so these inhuman sons of men——

"I tried to look at the thing in a scientific spirit. After all, these were scarcely to be counted human beings; less human they were and more remote than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the minds that would have made this state torment were gone. Why should I trouble? The Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the antlike Morlocks preserved and preyed upon, probably saw to the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing by my side!

"Then I tried to preserve myself from the horror that was coming upon me by regarding it as a rigorous punishment of human selfishness; man had been content to live in ease and delight upon the labors of his fellow-men; had taken Necessity as his watchword and excuse, and in fullness of time Necessity had come

home to him. I tried even a Carlyle-like scorn of these wretched aristocrats in decline.

"But this attitude of mind was impossible. However great their intellectual degradation, the Eloi had kept too much of the human form not to claim my sympathy, and to make me perforce a participant in their degradation and their fear.

"I had at this time very vague ideas of what course I should pursue. My first idea was to secure some safe place of refuge for Weena and myself, and to make myself such arms of metal or stone as I could contrive. That necessity was immediate. In the next place, I hoped to procure some means of fire, so that I should have the weapon of a torch at hand, for nothing, I knew, would be more efficient against these Morlocks. Then I wanted to arrange some contrivance to break open the doors of bronze under the white sphinx. I had in mind a battering ram. I had a persuasion that if I could enter these doors and carry a blaze of light before me, I should discover the Time Machine and escape. I could not imagine the Morlocks were powerful enough to remove it far. Weena I had resolved to bring with me to our own Time.

"Turning such schemes over in my mind, I pursued our way toward the building which my fancy had chosen as our dwelling place.

CHAPTER X.

THE PALACE OF GREEN PORCELAIN.

"This Palace of Green Porcelain, when we approached it about noon, was, I found, deserted and falling into ruin. Only ragged vestiges of grass remained in its windows, and great sheets of the green facing had fallen

away in places from the corroded metallic framework. It lay very high upon a turfy down, and, looking northeastward before I entered it, I was surprised to see a large estuary, or an arm of the sea, where I judged Wandsworth and Battersea must once have been. I thought then—though I never followed the thought up—of what might have happened, or might be happening, to the living things in the sea.

"The material of the Palace proved, upon examination, to be indeed porcelain, and above the face of it I saw an inscription in some unknown characters. I thought, rather foolishly, that Weena might help me to interpret this, but I only learned that the bare idea of writing had never entered her head. She always seemed to me, I fancy, more human than she was, perhaps because her affection was so human.

"Within the big valves of the door—which were open and broken—we found, instead of the customary hall, a long gallery lit by many side windows. Even at the first glance I was reminded of a museum. The tiled floor was thick with dust, and a remarkable array of miscellaneous objects were shrouded in the same gray covering. Clearly, the place had been derelict for a very considerable time.

"Then I perceived, standing strange and gaunt in the center of the hall, what was clearly the lower part of the skeleton of some huge animal. As I approached this I recognized by the oblique feet that it was some extinct creature after the fashion of the megatherium. The skull and the upper bones lay beside it in the thick dust, and in one place where rain water had dripped through some leak in the roof, the skeleton had decayed away. Further along the gallery was the huge skeleton barrel of a brontosaurus. My museum hypothesis was confirmed. Going toward the side of the gallery I found what appeared to be sloping shelves, and clear-

ing away the thick dust, I found the old familiar glass cases of our own time. But these must have been air-tight, to judge from the fair preservation of some of their contents.

"Clearly we stood among the ruins of some latter day South Kensington. Here apparently was the Palaeontological Section, and a very splendid array of fossils it must have been; though the inevitable process of decay that had been warded off for a time, and had, through the extinction of bacteria and fungi, lost ninety-nine hundredths of its force, was nevertheless, with extreme sureness, if with extreme slowness, at work again upon all its treasures. Here and there I found traces of the little people in the shape of rare fossils broken to pieces or threaded in strings upon reeds. And the cases had in some instances been bodily removed—by the Morlocks, as I judged.

"The place was very silent. The thick dust deadened our footsteps. Weena, who had been rolling a sea urchin down the sloping glass of a case, presently came, as I stared about me, and very quietly took my hand and stood beside me.

"At first I was so much surprised by this ancient monument of an intellectual age that I gave no thought to the possibilities it presented me. Even my preoccupation about the Time Machine and the Morlocks receded a little from my mind. The curiosity concerning human destiny that had led to my time traveling was removed. Now, judging from the size of the place, this Palace of Green Porcelain had a great deal more in it than a gallery of palaeontology; possibly historical galleries, it might be even a library. To me, at least in my present circumstances, these would be vastly more interesting than this spectacle of old-time geology in decay.

"Exploring, I found another short gallery running transversely to the first. This appeared to be devoted to minerals, and the sight of a block of sulphur set my mind running on gunpowder. But I could find no saltpeter; indeed, no nitrates of any kind. Doubtless they had deliquesced ages ago. Yet the sulphur hung in my mind and set up a train of thinking. As for the rest of the contents of that place, though on the whole they were the best preserved of all I saw—I had little interest. I am no specialist in mineralogy, and I soon went on down a very ruinous aisle running parallel to the first hall I had entered.

"Apparently this section had been devoted to Natural History, but here everything had long since passed out of recognition. A few shriveled vestiges of what had once been stuffed animals, dried-up mummies in jars that had once held spirit, a brown dust of departed plants, that was all. I was sorry for this, because I should have been glad to trace the patient readjustments by which the conquest of animated nature had been attained.

"From this we came to a gallery of simply colossal proportions, but singularly ill lit, and with its floor running downward at a slight angle from the end at which I entered it. At intervals there hung white globes from the ceiling—many of them cracked and smashed—which suggested that originally the place had been artificially lit. Here I was more in my element, for I found rising on either side of me the huge bulks of big machines, all greatly corroded, and many broken down, but some still fairly complete in all their parts. You know I have a certain weakness for mechanism, and I was inclined to linger among these, the more so since for the most part they had the interest of puzzles, and I could make only the vaguest guesses of what they were for. I fancied if I could solve these puzzles I should find

myself in the possession of powers that might be of use against the Morlocks.

"Suddenly Weena came very close to my side, so suddenly that she startled me.

"Had it not been for her I do not think I should have noticed that the floor of the gallery sloped at all.* The end I had entered was quite above ground, and was lit by rare slit-like windows. As one went down the length of the place, the ground came up against these windows, until there was at last a pit like the 'area' of a London house, before each, and only a narrow line of daylight at the top. I went slowly along, puzzling about the machines, and had been too intent upon them to notice the gradual diminution of the light, until Weena's increasing apprehension attracted my attention.

"Then I saw that the gallery ran down at last into a thick darkness. I hesitated about proceeding, and then as I looked around me, I saw that the dust was here less abundant and its surface less even. Further away toward the dim, it appeared to be broken by a number of small, narrow footprints. At that my sense of the immediate presence of the Morlocks revived. I felt that I was wasting my time in my academic examination of this machinery. I called to mind that it was already far advanced in the afternoon, and that I had still no weapon, no refuge, and no means of making a fire. And then, down in the remote black of the gallery I heard a peculiar pattering and those same odd noises I had heard down the well.

"I took Weena's hand. Then, struck with a sudden idea, I left her, and turned to a machine from which projected a lever not unlike those in a signal box. Clambering upon the stand of the machine and grasp-

* It may be, of course, that the floor did not slope, but that the museum was built upon the side of the hill.—Editor.

ing this lever in my hands, I put all my weight upon it sideways. Weena, deserted in the central aisle, began suddenly to whimper. I had judged the strength of the lever pretty correctly, for it snapped after a minute's strain, and I rejoined Weena with a mace in my hand more than sufficient, I judged, for any Morlock skull I might encounter.

"And I longed very much to kill a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one's own descendants, but it was impossible somehow to feel any humanity in the things. Only my disinclination to leave Weena, and a persuasion that if I began to slake my thirst for murder my Time Machine might suffer, restrained me from going straight down the gallery and killing the brutes I heard there.

"Mace in one hand and Weena in the other we went out of that gallery and into another still larger, which at the first glance reminded me of a military chapel hung with tattered flags. The brown and charred rags that hung from the sides of it, I presently recognized as the decaying vestiges of books. They had long since dropped to pieces and every semblance of print had left them. But here and there were warped and cracked boards and metallic clasps that told the tale well enough.

"Had I been a literary man I might perhaps have moralized upon the futility of all ambition, but as it was, the thought that struck me with keenest force, was the enormous waste of labor rather than of hope, to which this somber gallery of rotting paper testified. At the time I will confess, though it seems a petty trait now, that I thought chiefly of the Philosophical Transactions, and my own seventeen papers upon physical optics.

"Then going up a broad staircase we came to what may once have been a gallery of technical chemistry. And here I had not a little hope of discovering some-

thing to help me. Except at one end, where the roof had collapsed, this gallery was well preserved. I went eagerly to every unbroken case. And at last, in one of the really air-tight cases, I found a box of matches. Very eagerly I tried them. They were perfectly good. They were not even damp.

"At that discovery I suddenly turned to Weena. 'Dance!' I cried to her, in her own tongue. For now I had a weapon indeed against the horrible creatures we feared. And so in that derelict museum, upon the thick, soft coating of dust, to Weena's huge delight, I solemnly performed a sort of composite dance, whistling 'The Land of the Leal' as cheerfully as I could. In part it was a modest cancan, in part a step dance, in part a skirt dance—so far as my coat tail permitted—and in part original. For naturally I am inventive, as you know.

"Now, I still think that for this box of matches to have escaped the wear of time for immemorial years was a strange, and, for me, a most fortunate thing. Yet oddly enough, I found here a far more unlikely substance, and that was camphor. I found it in a sealed jar, that, by chance, I supposed had been really hermetically sealed. I fancied at first the stuff was paraffin wax, and smashed the jar accordingly. But the odor of camphor was unmistakable. It struck me as singularly odd, that among the universal decay, this volatile substance had chanced to survive, perhaps through many thousand years. It reminded me of a sepia painting I had once seen done from the ink of a fossil Belemnite that must have perished and become fossilized millions of years ago. I was about to throw this camphor on one side, and then remembering that it was inflammable and burnt with a good bright flame, I put it into my pocket.

"I found no explosives, however, or any means of

breaking down the bronze doors. As yet my iron crow-bar was the most hopeful thing I had chanced upon. Nevertheless, I left that gallery greatly elated by my discoveries.

"I cannot tell you the whole story of my exploration through that long afternoon. It would require a great effort of memory to recall it at all in the proper order. I remember a long gallery containing the rusty stands of arms of all ages, and that I hesitated between my crow-bar and a hatchet or a sword. I could not carry both, however, and my bar of iron, after all, promised best against the bronze gates. There were rusty guns, pistols and rifles here; most of them were masses of rust, but many of aluminum, and still fairly sound. But any cartridges or powder there may have been had rotted into dust. One corner I saw was charred and shattered; perhaps, I thought, by an explosion among the specimens there. In another place was a vast array of idols—Polynesian, Mexican, Grecian, Phœnician, every country on earth, I should think. And here, yielding to an irresistible impulse, I wrote my name upon the nose of a steatite monster from South America that particularly took my fancy.

"As the evening drew on my interest waned. I went through gallery after gallery, dusty, silent, often ruinous, the exhibits sometimes mere heaps of rust and lignite, sometimes fresher. In one place I suddenly found myself near a model of a tin mine, and then by the merest accident I discovered in an air-tight case two dynamite cartridges; I shouted 'Eureka!' and smashed the case joyfully. Then came a doubt. I hesitated, and then selecting a little side gallery I made my essay. I never felt such a bitter disappointment as I did then, waiting five, ten, fifteen minutes for the explosion that never came. Of course the things were dummies, as I might have guessed from their presence

there. I really believe had they not been so, I should have rushed off incontinently there and then, and blown sphinx, bronze doors, and, as it proved, my chances of finding the Time Machine all together into non-existence.

"It was after that, I think, that we came to a little open court within the palace, turfed and with three fruit trees. There it was we rested and refreshed ourselves.

"Toward sunset I began to consider our position. Night was now creeping upon us and my inaccessible hiding place was still to be found. But that troubled me very little now. I had in my possession a thing that was perhaps the best of all defenses against the Morlocks. I had matches again. I also had the camphor in my pocket if a blaze were required. It seemed to me that the best thing we could do would be to pass the night in the open again, protected by a fire.

"In the morning there was the Time Machine to obtain. Toward that as yet I had only my iron mace. But now with my growing knowledge I felt very differently toward the bronze doors than I had done hitherto. Up to this I had refrained from forcing them, largely because of the mystery on the other side. They had never impressed me as being very strong, and I hoped to find my bar of iron not altogether inadequate for the work.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE DARKNESS OF THE FOREST.

"We emerged from the Palace of Green Porcelain while the sun was still in part above the horizon. I was determined to reach the white sphinx early the next

morning, and I proposed before the dusk came to push through the woods that had stopped me on the previous journey. My plan was to go as far as possible that night, and then, building a fire about us, to sleep under the protection of its glare. Accordingly as we went along I gathered any sticks or dried grass I saw, and presently had my arms full of such litter. So loaded, our progress was slower than I had anticipated, and besides, Weena was tired. I, too, began to suffer from sleepiness, and it was fully night before we reached the wood.

"Now, upon the shrubby hill upon the edge of this, Weena would have stopped, fearing the darkness before us. But a singular sense of impending calamity, that should indeed have served me as a warning, drove me onward. I had been without sleep for the length of a night and two days, and I was feverish and irritable. I felt sleep coming upon me, and with it the Morlocks.

"While we hesitated I saw among the bushes up the slope behind us, and dim against the sky, three crouching figures. There was scrub and long grass all about us, and I did not feel safe from their insidious approach. The forest, I calculated, was rather less than a mile in breadth. If we could get through it, the hillside beyond was bare, and to me it seemed an altogether safer resting place. I thought that with my matches and the camphor I could contrive to keep my path illuminated through the woods. Yet it was evident that if I was to flourish matches with my hands I should have to abandon my firewood. So, rather reluctantly, I put this down.

"Then it came into my head that I would amaze our friends by lighting it. Ultimately I was to discover the atrocious folly of this proceeding, but just

then it came to my mind as an ingenious move for covering our retreat.

"I don't know if you have ever thought what a rare thing in the absence of man and in a temperate climate flames must be. The sun's heat is rarely strong enough to burn even when focussed by dewdrops, as is sometimes the case in more tropical districts. Lightning may blast and blacken, but it rarely gives rise to widespread fire. Decaying vegetation may occasionally smoulder with the heat of its fermentation, but this again rarely results in flames. Now, in this decadent age the art of fire-making had been altogether forgotten on the earth. The red tongues that went licking up my heap of wood were an altogether new and strange thing to Weena.

"She wanted to run to it and play with it. I believe she would have cast herself into it had I not restrained her. But I caught her up and in spite of her struggles plunged boldly before me into the wood. For a little way the glare of my fire lit the path. Looking back presently I could see, through the crowded tree stems, that from my heap of sticks the blaze had spread to some bushes adjacent, and a curved line of fire was creeping up the grass of the hill. I laughed at that.

"Then I turned toward the dark trees before me again. It was very black and Weena clung to me convulsively, but there was still, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, sufficient light for me to avoid blundering against the stems. Overhead it was simply black, except when here and there a gap of remote blue sky shone down upon me. I lit none of my matches because I had no hand free. Upon my left arm I carried my little one, in my right hand I had the iron bar I had wrenched from the machine.

"For some way I heard nothing but the crackling twigs under my feet, the faint rustle of the breeze

above, and my breathing and the throb of the blood vessels in my ears. Then I seemed to hear a pattering about me.

"I pushed on grimly. The pattering became more distinct, and then I heard the same queer sounds and voices I had heard before in the underworld. There were evidently several of the Morlocks, and they were closing in upon me.

"In another minute I felt a tug at my coat, then something at my arm. Weena shivered violently and became quite still.

"It was time for a match. But to get at that I must put her down. I did so, and immediately as I fumbled at my pocket a struggle began in the darkness about my knees, perfectly silent on her part and with the same peculiar cooing sounds on the part of the Morlocks. Soft little hands, too, were creeping over my coat and back, touching even my neck.

"The match scratched and fizzed. I held it flaring, and immediately the white backs of the Morlocks became visible as they fled amid the trees. I hastily took a lump of camphor from my pocket and prepared to light it as soon as the match waned.

"Then I looked at Weena. She was lying, clutching my feet and quite motionless, with her face to the ground. With a sudden fright, I stooped to her. She seemed scarcely to breathe. I lit the block of camphor and flung it to the ground, and as it spit and flared up and drove back the Morlocks and the shadows, I knelt down and lifted up Weena. The wood behind seemed full of the stir and murmur of a great company of creatures.

"Apparently she had fainted. I put her carefully upon my shoulder and rose to push on, and then came a horrible realization.

"While manoeuvering with my matches and Weena,

I had turned myself about several times, and now I had not the faintest idea in what direction my path lay. For all I knew I might be facing back toward the Palace of Green Porcelain.

"I found myself in a cold perspiration. I had to think rapidly what to do. I determined to build a fire and encamp where we were. I put the motionless Weena down upon a turfy bole. Very hastily, as my first lump of camphor waned, I began collecting sticks and leaves.

"Here and there out of the darkness round me the eyes of the Morlocks shone like carbuncles.

"Presently the camphor flickered and went out. I lit a match, and as I did so two white forms that had been approaching Weena dashed hastily back. One was so blinded by the light that he came straight for me, and I felt his bones grind under the blow of my fist. He gave a whoop of dismay, staggered a little way, and fell down.

"I lit another piece of camphor and went on gathering my bonfire. Presently I noticed how dry was some of the foliage above me, for since I had arrived on the Time Machine, a matter of a week, no rain had fallen. So, instead of casting about among the trees for fallen twigs I began leaping up and dragging down branches. Very soon I had a choking, smoky fire of green wood and dry sticks, and could save my other lumps of camphor.

"Then I turned to where Weena lay beside my iron mace. I tried what I could to revive her, but she lay like one dead. I could not even satisfy myself whether or not she breathed.

"Now the smoke of the fire beat over toward me, and it must have made me suddenly heavy. Moreover, the vapor of camphor was in the air. My fire would not want replenishing for an hour or so. I felt very

weary after my exertion and sat down. The wood, too, was full of a slumberous murmur that I did not understand.

"I seemed merely to nod and open my eyes. Then it was all dark around me, and the Morlocks had their hands upon me. Flinging off their clinging fingers I hastily felt in my pocket for the match-box, and—it had gone! Then they gripped and closed with me again.

"In a moment I knew what had happened. I had slept, and my fire had gone out, and the bitterness of death came over my soul. The forest seemed full of the smell of burning wood. I was caught by the neck, by the hair, by the arms, and pulled down. It was indescribably horrible in the darkness to feel all these soft creatures heaped upon me. I felt as if I was in a monstrous spider's web. I was overpowered. Down I went.

"I felt some little teeth nipping at my neck. Abruptly I rolled over, and as I did so, my hand came against my iron lever. Somehow this gave me strength for another effort. I struggled up, shaking off these human rats from me, and then holding the bar short, I thrust where I judged their faces might be. I could feel the succulent giving of flesh and bone under my blows, and for a moment I was free.

"The strange exultation that so often seems to accompany fighting came upon me. I knew that both I and Weena were lost, but I determined to make the Morlocks pay for their meat. I stood with my back to a tree swinging the iron bar before me. The whole wood was full of the stir and cries of them.

"A minute passed. Their voices seemed to rise to a higher pitch of excitement and their movements became faster. Yet none came within reach of me. I stood glaring at the blackness. Then suddenly hope.

"What if the Morlocks had no courage?

"And close on the heels of that came a strange thing. The darkness seemed to grow luminous. Very dimly I began to see the Morlocks about me—three, battered at my feet—and then I perceived with incredulous surprise that the others were running, in an incessant stream, as it seemed to me, from behind me, and away through the wood in front of me. And their backs seemed no longer white, but reddish.

"Then as I stood agape I saw, across a gap of starlight between the branches, a little red spark go drifting and vanish. And at that I understood the smell of burning wood, the slumberous murmur that was growing now into a gusty roaring, the red glow, and the flight of the Morlocks.

"Stepping out from behind my tree and looking back, I saw through the black pillars of the nearer trees the flames of the burning forest. No doubt it was my first fire coming after me. With that I hastily looked round for Weena, but she was gone. The hissing and crackling behind me, the explosive thud, as each fresh tree burst into flame, left little time for reflection. With my iron bar still in hand I followed in the path of the Morlocks.

"It was a close race. Once the flames crept forward so swiftly on my right as I ran, that I was outflanked and had to strike off to the left. But at last I emerged upon a small open place, and as I did so a Morlock came blundering toward me and passed me, and went on straight into the fire.

"And now I was to see the most weird and horrible scene, I think, of all that I beheld in that future age.

"This whole space was as bright as day with the reflection of the fire. In the center was a small hillock or tumulus surmounted by a scorched hawthorn. Be-

yond this hill was another arm of the burning forest from which yellow tongues were already writhing, and completely encircling the space with a fence of fire. Upon the hillside were perhaps thirty or forty Morlocks, dazzled by the light and heat of the fire, which was now very bright and hot, blundering hither and thither against each other in their bewilderment. At first I did not realize their blindness, and struck furiously at them with my bar in a frenzy of fear as they approached me, killing one and crippling several others. But when I had watched the gestures of one of them groping under the hawthorn against the red sky, and heard the moans to which they all gave vent, I was assured of their absolute helplessness and refrained from striking any of them again. Yet every now and then one would come straight toward me, setting loose a quivering horror, that made me quick to elude him. At one time the flames died down somewhat, and I feared these foul creatures would presently be able to see me, and I was even thinking of beginning the fight by killing some of them before this should happen, but the fire burst out again brightly and I stayed my hand. I walked about the hill among them and avoiding them, looking for some trace of Weena, but I found nothing.

"At last I sat down upon the summit of the hillock and watched this strange, incredible company of the blind, groping to and fro, making uncanny noises to one another, as the glare of the fire beat upon them. The coiling uprush of smoke streamed across the sky, and through the rare tatters of that red canopy, remote as though they belonged to another universe, shone the little stars. Two or three Morlocks came blundering into me and I drove them off, trembling myself as I did so, with blows of my fist. For the most of that

night I was persuaded it was a nightmare. I bit myself and screamed aloud in a passionate desire to awake. I beat on the ground with my hands, and got up, and sat down again, and wandered here and there, and again sat down on the crest of the hill. Then I would fall to rubbing my eyes and calling upon God to let me awake. Thrice I saw Morlocks put their heads down in a kind of agony and rush into the flames. But at last, above the subsiding red of the fire, above the streaming masses of black smoke and the whitening and blackening tree stumps, and the diminishing number of these dim creatures, came the white light of the day.

"I searched again over the open space for some traces of Weena, but could find none. I had half feared to discover her mangled remains, but clearly they had left her poor little body in the forest. I cannot describe how it relieved me to think that it had escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined. As I thought of that I was almost moved to begin a massacre of the defenseless abominations about me, but I contained myself. This hillock, as I have said, was a kind of island in the forest. From its summit I could now make out, through a haze of smoke, the Palace of Green Porcelain, and from that I could get my bearings for the white sphinx. And so leaving the remnant of these damned souls going hither and thither and moaning, as the day grew clearer, I tied some grass about my feet and limped on across smoking ashes and among black stems that still pulsated internally with fire, toward the hiding place of the Time Machine.

"I walked slowly, for I was almost exhausted as well as lame, and I felt the most intense wretchedness on account of the horrible death of little Weena, which then seemed an overwhelming calamity. Yet even now, as I tell you of it in this old familiar room, it

seems more like the sorrow of a dream than an actual loss. But it left me absolutely lonely again that morning—terribly alone. I began to think of this house of mine, of this fireside, of some of you, and with such thoughts came a longing that was pain.

"As I walked over the smoking ashes under the bright morning sky I made a discovery. In my trouser pocket were still some loose matches. The box must have leaked before it was lost!

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRAP OF THE WHITE SPHINX.

"So about eight or nine in the morning I came to the same seat of yellow metal from which I had viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon that evening and could not refrain from laughing bitterly at my confidence. Here was the same beautiful scene, the same abundant foliage, the same splendid palaces and magnificent ruins, the same silver river running between its fertile banks. The gay robes of the beautiful people moved hither and thither among the trees. Some were bathing in exactly the place where I had saved Weena, and that suddenly gave me a keen stab of pain. And like blots upon the landscape rose the cupolas above the ways to the underworld. I understood now what all the beauty of the overworld people covered. Very pleasant was their day, as pleasant as the day of the cattle in the field. Like the cattle they knew of no enemies, and provided against no needs. And their end was the same.

"I grieved to think how brief the dream of the human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had

set itself steadfastly toward comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanence as its watchwords, it had attained its hopes—to come to this at last. Once, life and property must have reached almost absolute safety. The rich had been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work. No doubt in that perfect world there had been no unemployed problem, no social question left unsolved. And a great quiet had followed.

"It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change. Only those animals partake of intelligence that have to meet a huge variety of needs and dangers.

"So, as I see it, the upperworld man had drifted toward his feeble prettiness, and the underworld to mere mechanical industry. But that perfect state had lacked one thing even of mechanical perfection—absolute permanency. Apparently, as time went on, the feeding of the underworld, however it was effected, had become disjointed. Mother Necessity, who had been staved off for a few thousand years, came back again, and she began low. The underworld, being in contact with machinery, which, however perfect, still needs some little thought outside of habit, had probably retained, perforce, rather more initiative, if less of every other human character, than the upper. And when other meat failed them, they turned to what old habit had hitherto forbidden. So I say I saw it in my last view of the world 810,701. It may be as wrong an explanation as mortal wit could invent. It is how the thing shaped itself to me, and as that I give it to you.

"After the fatigues, excitements and terrors of the past days, and in spite of my grief, this seat and the tranquil view and the warm sunlight were very pleasant. I was very tired and sleepy, and soon my theorizing passed into dozing. Catching myself at that I took my own hint, and spreading myself out upon the turf, I had a long and refreshing sleep.

"I awoke a little before sunsetting. I now felt safe against being caught napping by the Morlocks, and stretching myself I came on down the hill toward the white sphinx. I had my crowbar in one hand, and the other played with the matches in my pocket.

"And now came a most unexpected thing. As I approached the pedestal of the sphinx I found the bronze panels were open. They had slid down into grooves.

"At that I stopped short before them, hesitating to enter.

"Within was a small apartment, and on a raised place in the corner of this was the Time Machine. I had the small levers in my pocket. So here, after all my elaborate preparations for the siege of the white sphinx, was a meek surrender. I threw my iron bar away, almost sorry not to use it.

"A sudden thought came into my head as I stooped toward the portal. For once at least I grasped the mental operations of the Morlocks. Suppressing a strong inclination to laugh, I stepped through the bronze frame and up to the Time Machine. I was surprised to find it had been carefully oiled and cleaned. I have suspected since that the Morlocks had even partially taken it to pieces while trying in their dim way to grasp its purpose.

"Now, as I stood and examined it, finding a pleasure in the mere touch of the contrivance, the thing I had expected happened. The bronze panels suddenly slid

up and struck the frame with a clang. I was in the dark—trapped. At that I chuckled gleefully.

"I could already hear their murmuring laughter as they came toward me. Very calmly I tried to strike the match. I had only to fix on the levers and depart then like a ghost. But I had overlooked one little thing. The matches were of that abominable kind that light only on the box.

"You may imagine how all my calm vanished. The little brutes were close upon me. One touched me. I made a sweeping blow in the dark at them with the lever, and began to scramble into the saddle of the Machine. Then came one hand upon me and then another.

"Then I had simply to fight against their persistent fingers for my levers, and at the same time feel for the studs over which these fitted. One, indeed, they almost got away from me. As it slipped from my hand I had to butt in the dark with my head—I could hear the Morlock's skull ring—to recover it. It was a nearer thing than the fight in the forest, I think, this last scramble.

"But at last the lever was fixed and pulled over. The clinging hands slipped from me. The darkness presently fell from my eyes. I found myself in the same gray light and tumult I have already described.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FURTHER VISION.

"I have already told you of the sickness and confusion that comes with time traveling. And this time I was not seated properly in the saddle, but sideways and in an unstable fashion. For an indefinite time I

clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how it went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I had arrived. One dial records days, another thousands of days, another millions of days, and another thousands of millions. Now, instead of reversing the levers, I had pulled them over so as to go forward with them, and when I came to look at these indicators, I found that the thousands hand was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hand of a watch, into futurity.

"Very cautiously, for I remembered my former headlong fall, I began to reverse my motion. Slower and slower went the circling hands, until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale. Still slower, until the gray haze around me became distincter, and dim outlines of a low hill and a sea became visible.

"But as my motion became slower there was, I found, no blinking change of day and night. A steady twilight brooded over the earth. And the band of light that had indicated the sun had, I now noticed, become fainter, had faded, indeed, to invisibility in the east, and in the west was increasingly broader and redder. The circling of the stars growing slower and slower had given place to creeping points of light. At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, very red and large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat. The work of the tidal drag was accomplished. The earth had come to rest with one face to the sun even as in our own time the moon faces the earth.

"I stopped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine, looking round me.

"The sky was no longer blue. Northeastward it was inky black, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale, white stars. Overhead it was a deep

Indian red, and starless, and southeastward it grew brighter to where, cut by the horizon, lay the motionless hull of the huge red sun.

"The rocks about me were of a harsh reddish color, and all the trace of life I could see at first was the intensely green vegetation that covered every projecting point on its southeastern side. It was the same rich green that one sees on forest moss or on the lichen in caves, plants which, like these, grow in a perpetual twilight.

"The Machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the southwest to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt—pink under the lurid sky.

"There was a sense of oppression in my head and I noticed that I was breathing very fast. The sensations remind me of my only experience of mountaineering, and from that I judged the air was more rarified than it is now.

"Far away up the desolate slope I heard a sharp scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond.

"The sound of its voice was so dismal that I shivered, and seated myself more firmly upon the Machine.

"Looking round me I saw that, quite near to me, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly toward me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Can you imagining a crab as large as yonder table, with its numerous legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws sway-

ing, its long antennae like carters' whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the numerous palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it approached.

"As I stared at this sinister apparition crawling toward me, I felt a tickling on my cheeks as though a fly had alighted there.

"I tried to brush it away with my hand, but in a moment it returned, and almost immediately after another came near my ear. I struck at this and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiftly out of my hand. With a frightful qualm I turned and saw I had grasped the antennae of another monster crab that stood immediately behind me. Its evil eyes were wriggling on their stalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with green slime, were descending upon me.

"In another moment my hand was on the lever of the Time Machine, and I had placed a month between myself and these monsters. But I found I was still on the same beach and I saw them distinctly now as soon as I stopped. Dozens of them seemed to be crawling here and there in the somber light among the foliated sheets of intense green.

"I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform, poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurt one's lungs; all contributed to an appalling effect.

"I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun, the same dying sea, the same chill air,

and the same crowd of earthly crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks.

"So I traveled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth's fate, tracing with a strange fascination how the sun was growing larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebbing out. At last, more than thirty million years hence, the huge, red-hot dome of the sun had come to obscure nearly a sixth part of the darkling heavens. Then it was I stopped, for the crawling multitude of crabs had disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and lichens, seemed lifeless again.

"As soon as I stopped a bitter cold assailed me. The air felt keenly cold, and rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the northeastward the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky, and I could see an undulating crest of pinkish white hillocks. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, drifting masses further out, but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal sunset, was still unfrozen.

"I looked about me to see if any traces of animals remained. A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of the Machine. I saw nothing moving, on earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks alone testified that life was not extinct. A shallow sandbank had appeared in the sea and the water had receded from the beach. I fancied I saw some black object flopping about upon this bank, but it became motionless as I looked at it, and I judged my eye had been deceived and that the object was merely a rock. The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.

"Suddenly I noticed that the circular outline, westward, of the sun had changed, that a concavity, a bay,

had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute, perhaps, I stared aghast at this blackness that was creeping over the day, and then I realized that an eclipse was beginning. No doubt, now that the moon was creeping over nearer to the earth, and the earth to the sun, eclipses were of frequent occurrence.

"The darkness grew apace, a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and then the white flakes that were falling out of the air increased. The tide was creeping in with a ripple and a whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent—silent! It would be hard to convey to you the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives, were over. As the darkness thickened the eddying flakes became more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze grew to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the eclipse sweeping toward me. In another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely black.

"A horror of this great darkness came upon me. The cold that smote to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing, overcame me. I shivered and a deadly nausea seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sky appeared the edge of the sun.

"I got off the Machine to recover myself. I felt giddy and incapable of facing the return journey. As I stood sick and confused I saw again the moving thing upon the shoal—there was no mistake now that it was a moving thing—against the red water of the sea. It was a round thing, of the size of a football perhaps, or bigger; it seemed black against the weltering blood-

red water, and it was hopping fitfully about. Then I felt I was fainting. A terrible dread of lying helpless in that remote twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.

"So I came home. For a long time I must have been insensible upon the Machine. The blinking succession of the days and nights was resumed, the sun grew golden again, the sky blue. I breathed with greater freedom. The fluctuating contours of the land ebbed and flowed. The hands spun backward upon the dials. At last I saw again the dim shadows of homes, the evidences of decadent humanity. These, too, changed and passed, and others came. Presently, when the millions dial was at zero, I slackened speed, and began to recognize our own pretty and familiar architecture. The thousands hand ran back to the starting point, the night and day flapped slower and slower. Then the old walls of the laboratory came round me. Very gently now I diminished the pace of the mechanism.

"I saw one little thing that seemed odd to me. I think I have told you that when I set out, before my velocity became very high, Mrs. Watchett had walked across the room, traveling, as it seemed to me, like a rocket. As I returned I passed again across that minute when she traversed the laboratory. But now every motion appeared to be the exact inversion of her previous one. The door at the lower end opened and she glided quietly up the laboratory, back foremost, and disappeared behind the door by which she had previously entered.

"Then I stopped the Machine, and saw about me again the old familiar laboratory, my tools, my appliances, just as I had left them. I got off the thing very shakily and sat down upon my bench. For several minutes I trembled violently. Then I became calmer.

Around me was my old workshop again, exactly as it had been. I might have slept there and the whole thing have been a dream.

"And yet not exactly. The thing had started from the southeast corner of the laboratory. It had come to rest again in the northwest, against the wall, where you will find it. That gives you the exact distance from my little lawn to the pedestal of the white sphinx.

"For a time my brain became stagnant. Presently I got up and came through the passage here, limping, because my heel was still painful, and feeling sorely begrimed. I saw the Pall Mall Gazette on the table by the door. I found the date was indeed to-day, and looking at the timepiece, saw the hour was almost eight o'clock. I heard your voices and the clatter of plates. I hesitated—I felt so sick and weak. Then I sniffed good wholesome meat, and opened the door. You know the rest. I washed and dined, and now I am telling you the story.

"I know," he said, after awhile, "that all this will be absolutely incredible to you, but to me the one incredible thing is that I am here to-night in this old familiar room, looking into your wholesome faces, and telling you all these strange adventures."

He looked at the Medical Man.

"No; I cannot expect you to believe me. Take it as a lie, or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race, until I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest. And taking it as a story, what do you think of it?"

He took up his pipe and began in his old accustomed manner to tap upon the bars of the grate.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER THE TIME TRAVELER'S STORY.

There was a momentary stillness. Then chairs began to creak and shoes to scrape upon the carpet. I took my eyes off the Time Traveler's face and looked round at his audience. They were in the dark and little spots of color swam before them. The Medical Man seemed absorbed in the contemplation of our host. The Editor was looking hard at the end of his cigar—the sixth. The Journalist fumbled for his watch. The others, as far as I remember, were motionless.

The Editor stood up, with a sigh.

"What a pity it is you're not a writer of stories!" he said, putting his hand on the Time Traveler's shoulder.

"You don't believe it?"

"Well——"

"I thought not." The Time Traveler turned round to us. "Where are the matches?" he said. He lit one and spoke over his pipe, puffing, "To tell you all the truth—I hardly believe it myself—and yet——"

His eyes fell with a mute inquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the little table. Then he turned over the hand holding his pipe, and I saw he was looking at some half-healed scars on his knuckles.

The Medical Man rose, came to the lamp, and examined the flowers. "The gynoecium's odd," he said.

The Psychologist leaned forward to see, holding out his hand for a specimen.

"I'm hanged if it isn't a quarter to one," said the Journalist. "How shall we get home?"

"Plenty of cabs at the station," said the Psychologist.

"It's a curious thing," said the Medical Man; "but

I certainly don't know the natural order of these flowers. May I have them?"

The Time Traveler hesitated. Then suddenly, "Certainly not."

"Where did you really get them?" said the Medical Man.

The Time Traveler put his hand to his head. He spoke like one who was trying to keep hold of an idea that eluded him. "They were put into my pocket by Weena—when I traveled into Time." He stared round the room. "I'm d——d if it isn't all going. This room and you and the atmosphere of every day is too much for my memory. Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a model of a Time Machine, or is it all only a dream? They say life is a dream, a precious poor dream at times—but I can't stand another that won't fit. It's madness. And where did the dream come from? I must look at that Machine. If there is one."

He caught up the lamp swiftly and carried it flaring redly through the door into the corridor.

We followed him.

There in the flickering light of the lamp was the Machine, sure enough, squat, ugly, and askew, a thing of brass, ebony, ivory, and translucent, glimmering quartz. Solid to the touch—for I put out my hand and felt the rail of it—and with brown spots and smears upon the ivory, and bits of grass and moss upon the lower parts, and one rail bent awry.

The Time Traveler put the lamp down on the bench, and ran his hand along the broken rail.

"It's all right now," he said. "The story I told you was true. I'm sorry to have brought you out here—in the cold."

He took up the lamp, and in an absolute silence we returned to the smoking-room.

The Time Traveler came into the hall and helped

the Editor on with his coat. The Medical Man looked into our host's face and, with a certain hesitation, told him he was suffering from overwork, at which he laughed hugely. I remember him standing in the open doorway, bawling good-night.

I shared a cab with the Editor. He thought the tale a "gaudy lie." For my own part, I was unable to come to any conclusion about the matter. The story was so fantastic and incredible, the telling so credible and sober. I lay awake most of the night thinking about it. I determined to go next day and see the Time Traveler again.

I was told he was in the laboratory, and being on easy terms in the house I went up to him. The laboratory, however, was empty. I stared for a minute at the Time Machine and put out my hand and touched a lever. At that the squat, substantial-looking mass swayed like a bough shaken by the wind. Its instability startled me extremely, and I had a queer reminiscence of childish days when I used to be forbidden to meddle. I came back through the corridor. The Time Traveler met me in the smoking-room. He was coming from the house. He had a small camera under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He laughed when he saw me and gave me an elbow to shake.

"I'm frightfully busy," he said; "with that thing in there."

"But is it not some hoax?" said I. "Do you really travel through Time?"

"Really and truly I do." And he looked frankly into my eyes.

He hesitated. His eye wandered round the room. "I only want half an hour," he said. "I know why you came, and it's awfully good of you. There's some magazines here. If you'll stop to lunch I'll prove this

time traveling to you up to the hilt. Specimens and all. If you'll forgive my leaving you now?"

I consented, hardly comprehending then the full import of his words, and he nodded and went on down the corridor. I heard the door of the laboratory slam, seated myself in a chair, and took up the New Review. What was he going to do before lunch time? Then suddenly I was reminded by an advertisement that I had promised to meet Richardson, the publisher, at two. I looked at my watch, and saw I could barely save that engagement. I got up and went down the passage to tell the Time Traveler.

As I took hold of the handle of the door I heard an exclamation oddly truncated at the end, and a click and a thud. A gust of air whirled round me as I opened the door, and from within came the sound of broken glass falling on the floor. The Time Traveler was not there. I seemed to see a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass for a moment, a figure so transparent that the bench behind with its sheets of drawings was absolutely distinct; but this phantasm I immediately perceived was illusory. The Time Machine had gone. Save for a subsiding stir of dust the central space of the laboratory was empty. A pane of the skylight had apparently just been blown in.

I felt an unreasonable amazement. I knew that something strange had happened, and for a moment could not distinguish what the strange thing might be. As I stood staring, the door into the garden opened, and the man-servant appeared.

We looked at each other. Then ideas began to come.

"Has Mr. —— gone out that way?" said I.

"No, sir. No one has come out this way. I was expecting to find him here."

At that I understood. At the risk of disappointing Richardson I remained waiting for the Time Traveler, waiting for the second, perhaps still stranger, story, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him.

But I am beginning to fear now that I must wait a lifetime for that. The Time Traveler vanished three years ago. Up to the present he has not returned, and when he does return he will find his home in the hands of strangers and his little gathering of auditors broken up forever. Filby has exchanged poetry for playwriting, and is a rich man—as literary men go—and extremely unpopular. The Medical Man is dead, the Journalist is in India, and the Psychologist has succumbed to paralysis. Some of the other men I used to meet there have dropped as completely out of existence as if they, too, had traveled off upon some similar anachronisms. And so, ending in a kind of dead wall, the story of the Time Machine must remain for the present at least.

THE FOUR-FIFTEEN EXPRESS

THE FOUR-FIFTEEN EXPRESS

Amelia B. Edwards

I.

THE events which I am about to relate took place between nine and ten years ago. Sebastopol had fallen in the early spring; the Peace of Paris had been concluded since March; our commercial relations with the Russian Empire were but recently renewed; and I, returning home after my first northward journey since the war, was well pleased with the prospect of spending the month of December under the hospitable and thoroughly English roof of my excellent friend Jonathan Jelf, Esquire, of Dumbleton Manor, Clayborough, East Anglia.

It was a foggy afternoon, singularly warm for the fourth of December, and I had arranged to leave London by the 4:15 express. The early darkness of winter had already closed in; the lamps were lighted in the carriages; a clinging damp dimmed the windows, adhered to the door-handles, and pervaded all the atmosphere; while the gas jets at the neighboring bookstand diffused a luminous haze that only served to make the gloom of the terminus more visible. Having arrived some seven minutes before the starting of the train, and, by the connivance of the guard, taken sole possession of an empty compartment, I lighted my travelling lamp, made myself particularly snug, and settled down to the undisturbed enjoyment of a book

and a cigar. Great, therefore, was my disappointment when, at the last moment, a gentleman came hurrying along the platform, glanced into my carriage, opened the locked door with a private key, and stepped in.

It struck me at the first glance that I had seen him before—a tall, spare man, thin-lipped, light-eyed, with an ungraceful stoop in the shoulders, and scant gray hair worn somewhat long upon the collar. He carried a light waterproof coat, an umbrella, and a large brown japanned deed-box, which last he placed under the seat. This done, he felt carefully in his breast-pocket, as if to make certain of the safety of his purse or pocket-book; laid his umbrella in the netting overhead; spread the waterproof across his knees, and exchanged his hat for a traveling cap of some Scotch material. By this time the train was moving out of the station, and into the faint gray of the wintry twilight beyond.

I now recognized my companion. I recognized him from the moment when he removed his hat and uncovered the lofty, furrowed, and somewhat narrow brow beneath. I had met him, as I distinctly remembered, some three years before, at the very house for which, in all probability, he was now bound, like myself. His name was Dwerrihouse; he was a lawyer by profession; and, if I was not greatly mistaken, was first cousin to the wife of my host. I knew also that he was a man eminently "well to do," both as regarded his professional and private means. The Jelfs entertained him with that sort of observant courtesy which falls to the lot of the rich relation; the children made much of him; and the old butler, albeit somewhat surly "to the general," treated him with deference. I thought, observing him by the vague mixture of lamplight and twilight, that Mrs. Jelf's cousin looked all the worse for the three years' wear and tear which had gone over his head since our last meeting. He was very pale,

and had a restless light in his eye that I did not remember to have observed before. The anxious lines, too, about his mouth were deepened, and there was a cavernous, hollow look about the cheeks and temples which seemed to speak of sickness or sorrow. He had glanced at me as he came in, but without any gleam of recognition in his face. Now he glanced again, as I fancied, somewhat doubtfully. When he did so for the third or fourth time, I ventured to address him.

"Mr. John Dwerrihouse, I think?"

"That is my name," he replied.

"I had the pleasure of meeting you at Dumbleton about three years ago."

Mr. Dwerrihouse bowed.

"I thought I knew your face," he said. "But your name, I regret to say——"

"Langford—William Langford. I have known Jonathan Jelf since we were boys together at Merchant Taylors, and I generally spend a few weeks at Dumbleton in the shooting season. I suppose we are bound for the same destination?"

"Not if you are on your way to the Manor," he replied. "I am traveling upon business—rather troublesome business, too—while you, doubtless, have only pleasure in view."

"Just so. I am in the habit of looking forward to this visit as to the brightest three weeks in all the year."

"It is a pleasant house," said Mr. Dwerrihouse.

"The pleasantest I know."

"And Jelf is thoroughly hospitable."

"The best and kindest fellow in the world!"

"They have invited me to spend Christmas week with them," pursued Mr. Dwerrihouse, after a moment's pause.

"And are you coming?"

"I cannot tell. It must depend upon the issue of this business which I have in hand. You have heard, perhaps, that we are about to construct a branch line from Blackwater to Stockbridge."

I explained that I had been some months away from England, and had therefore heard nothing of the contemplated improvement.

Mr. Dwerrihouse smiled complacently.

"It will be an improvement," he said; "a great improvement. Stockbridge is a flourishing town, and needs but a more direct railway communication with the metropolis to become an important centre of commerce. This branch was my own idea. I brought the project before the board, and have myself superintended the execution of it up to the present time."

"You are an East Anglian director, I presume?"

"My interest in the company," replied Mr. Dwerrihouse, "is threefold. I am a director; I am a considerable shareholder; and, as the head of the firm of Dwerrihouse, Dwerrihouse & Craik, I am the company's principal solicitor."

Loquacious, self-important, full of his pet project, and apparently unable to talk on any other subject, Mr. Dwerrihouse then went on to tell me of the opposition he had encountered and the obstacles he had overcome in the cause of the Stockbridge branch. I was entertained with a multitude of local details and local grievances. The rapacity of one squire; the impracticability of another; the indignation of the rector whose glebe was threatened; the culpable indifference of the Stockbridge townspeople, who could not be brought to see that their most vital interests hinged upon a junction with the Great East Anglian line; the spite of the local newspaper; and the unheard-of

difficulties attending the Common question, were each and all laid before me with a circumstantiality that possessed the deepest interest for my excellent fellow traveler, but none whatever for myself. From these, to my despair, he went on to more intricate matters; to the approximate expenses of construction per mile; to the estimates sent in by different contractors; to the probable traffic returns of the new line; to the provisional clauses of the new Act as enumerated in Schedule D of the company's last half-yearly report; and so on, and on, and on, till my head ached, and my attention flagged, and my eyes kept closing in spite of every effort that I made to keep them open. At length I was roused by these words:

"Seventy-five thousand pounds, cash down."

"Seventy-five thousand pounds, cash down," I repeated, in the liveliest tone I could assume. "That is a heavy sum."

"A heavy sum to carry here," replied Mr. Dwerrihouse, pointing significantly to his breast pocket, "but a mere fraction of what we shall ultimately have to pay."

"Do you mean to say that you have seventy-five thousand pounds at this moment upon your person?" I exclaimed.

"My good sir, have I not been telling you so for the last half hour?" said Mr. Dwerrihouse, testily. "That money has to be paid over at half-past eight o'clock this evening, at the office of Sir Thomas's solicitors, on completion of the deed of sale."

"But how will you get across by night from Blackwater to Stockbridge, with seventy-five thousand pounds in your pocket?"

"To Stockbridge?" echoed the lawyer. "I find I have made myself very imperfectly understood. I thought I had explained how this sum only carries

us as far as Mallingford—the first stage, as it were, of our journey—and how our route from Blackwater to Mullingford lies entirely through Sir Thomas Liddell's property."

"I beg your pardon," I stammered. "I fear my thoughts were wandering. So you only go as far as Mallingford to-night?"

"Precisely. I shall get conveyance from the 'Blackwater Arms.' And you?"

"Oh, Jelf sends a trap to meet me at Clayborough. Can I be the bearer of any message from you?"

"You may say, if you please, Mr. Langford, that I wished I could have been your companion all the way, and that I will come over if possible before Christmas."

"Nothing more?"

Mr. Dwerrihouse smiled grimly. "Well," he said, "you may tell my cousin that she need not burn the hall down in my honor this time, and that I shall be obliged if she will order the blue-room chimney to be swept before I arrive."

"That sounds tragic. Had you a conflagration on the occasion of your last visit to Dumbleton?"

"Something like it. There had been no fire lighted in my bedroom since the spring, the flue was foul, and the rooks had built in it; so when I went up to dress for dinner, I found the room full of smoke, and the chimney on fire. Are we already at Blackwater?"

The train had gradually come to a pause while Mr. Dwerrihouse was speaking, and, on putting my head out of the window, I could see the station, some few hundred yards ahead. There was another train before us blocking the way, and the guard was making use of the delay to collect the Blackwater tickets. I had scarcely ascertained our position, when the ruddy-faced official appeared at our carriage door.

"Tickets, sir!" said he.

"I am for Clayborough," I replied, holding out the tiny pink card.

He took it; glanced at it by the light of his little lantern; gave it back; looked, as I fancied, somewhat sharply at my fellow-traveler, and disappeared.

"He did not ask for yours," I said, with some surprise.

"They never do," replied Mr. Dwerrihouse. "They all know me; and, of course, I travel free."

"Blackwater! Blackwater!" cried the porter, running along the platform beside us, as we glided into the station.

Mr. Dwerrihouse pulled out his deed-box, put his travelling-cap in his pocket, resumed his hat, took down his umbrella, and prepared to be gone.

"Many thanks, Mr. Langford, for your society," he said, with old-fashioned courtesy. "I wish you a good evening."

"Good evening," I replied, putting out my hand.

But he either did not see it, or did not choose to see it, and, slightly lifting his hat, stepped out upon the platform. Having done this, he moved slowly away, and mingled with the departing crowd.

Leaning forward to watch him out of sight, I trod upon something which proved to be a cigar-case. It had fallen, no doubt from the pocket of his waterproof coat, and was made of dark morocco leather, with a silver monogram upon the side. I sprang out of the carriage just as the guard came up to lock me in.

"Is there one minute to spare?" I asked, eagerly. "The gentleman who traveled down with me from town has dropped his cigar-case—he is not yet out of the station."

"Just a minute and a half, sir," replied the guard. "You must be quick."

I dashed along the platform as fast as my feet could

carry me. It was a large station, and Mr. Dwerrihouse had by this time got more than half way to the farther end.

I, however, saw him distinctly, moving slowly with the stream. Then, as I drew nearer, I saw that he had met some friend—that they were talking as they walked—that they presently fell back somewhat from the crowd, and stood aside in earnest conversation. I made straight for the spot where they were waiting. There was a vivid gas-jet just above their heads, and the light fell full upon their faces. I saw both distinctly—the face of Mr. Dwerrihouse and the face of his companion. Running, breathless, eager as I was, getting in the way of porters and passengers, and fearful every instant less I should see the train going on without me, I yet observed that the newcomer was considerably younger and shorter than the director, that he was sandy-haired, mustachioed, small-featured, and dressed in a close-cut suit of Scotch tweed. I was now within a few yards of them. I ran against a stout gentleman—I was nearly knocked down by a luggage-truck—I stumbled over a carpet-bag—I gained the spot just as the driver's whistle warned me to return.

To my utter stupefaction they were no longer there. I had seen them but two seconds before—and they were gone! I stood still. I looked to right and left. I saw no sign of them in any direction. It was as if the platform had gaped and swallowed them.

"There were two gentlemen standing here a moment ago," I said to a porter at my elbow; "which way can they have gone?"

"I saw no gentlemen, sir," replied the man.

The whistle shrilled out again. The guard, far up the platform, held up his arm, and shouted to me to "come on!"

"If you're going on by this train, sir," said the porter, "you must run for it."

I did run for it, just gained the carriage as the train began to move, was shoved in by the guard, and left breathless and bewildered, with Mr. Dwerrihouse's cigar-case still in my hand.

It was the strangest disappearance in the world. It was like a transformation trick in a pantomime. They were there one moment—palpably there, talking, with the gaslight full upon their faces; and the next moment they were gone. There was no door near, no window, no staircase. It was a mere slip of barren platform, tapestried with big advertisements. Could anything be more mysterious?

It was not worth thinking about; and yet, for my life, I could not help pondering upon it—pondering, wondering, turning it over and over in my mind, and racking my brains for a solution of the enigma. I thought of it all the way from Blackwater to Clayborough. I thought of it all the way from Clayborough to Dumbleton, as I rattled along the smooth highway in a trim dog-cart drawn by a splendid black mare, and driven by the silentest and dapperest of East Anglian grooms.

We did the nine miles in something less than an hour, and pulled up before the lodge-gates just as the church-clock was striking half-past seven. A couple of minutes more, and the warm glow of the lighted hall was flooding out upon the gravel, a hearty grasp was on my hand, and a clear, jovial voice was bidding me "Welcome to Dumbleton."

"And now, my dear fellow," said my host, when the first greeting was over, "you have no time to spare. We dine at eight, and there are people coming to meet you; so you must just get the dressing business over as quickly as may be. By the way, you will meet some

acquaintances. The Biddulphs are coming, and Prendergast (Prendergast, of the Skirmishers) is staying in the house. Adieu! Mrs. Jelf will be expecting you in the drawing-room."

I was ushered to my room—not the blue room, of which Mr. Dwerrihouse had had disagreeable experience, but a pretty little bachelor's chamber, hung with a delicate chintz, and made cheerful by a blazing fire. I unlocked my portmanteau. I tried to be expeditious; but the memory of my railway adventure haunted me. I could not get free of it. I could not shake it off. It impeded me, it worried me, it tripped me up, it caused me to mislay my studs, to mistie my cravat, to wrench the buttons off my gloves. Worst of all, it made me so late that the party had all assembled before I reached the drawing-room. I had scarcely paid my respects to Mrs. Jelf when dinner was announced, and we paired off, some eight or ten couples strong, into the dining-room.

I am not going to describe either the guests, or the dinner. All provincial parties bear the strictest family resemblance, and I am not aware that an East Anglian banquet offers any exception to the rule. There was the usual country baronet and his wife; there were the usual country parsons and their wives; there was the sempiternal turkey and haunch of venison. Vanitas vanitatum. There is nothing new under the sun.

I was placed about midway down the table. I had taken one rector's wife down to dinner, and I had another at my left hand. They talked across me, and their talk was about babies. It was dreadfully dull. At length there came a pause. The entrées had just been removed, and the turkey had come upon the scene. The conversation had all along been of the languidest, but at this moment it happened to have stagnated altogether. Jelf was carving the turkey. Mrs. Jelf looked

as if she was trying to think of something to say. Everybody else was silent. Moved by an unlucky impulse, I thought I would relate my adventure.

"By the way, Jelf," I began, "I came down part of the way to-day with a friend of yours."

"Indeed!" said the master of the feast, slicing scientifically into the breast of the turkey. "With whom, pray?"

"With one who bade me tell you that he should, if possible, pay you a visit before Christmas."

"I cannot think who that could be," said my friend, smiling.

"It must be Major Thorp," suggested Mrs. Jelf.

I shook my head.

"It was not Major Thorp," I replied. "It was a near relation of your own, Mrs. Jelf."

"Then I am more puzzled than ever," replied my hostess. "Pray tell me who it was."

"It was no less a person than your cousin, Mr. John Dwerrihouse."

Jonathan Jelf laid down his knife and fork. Mrs. Jelf looked at me in a strange, startled way, and said never a word.

"And he desired me to tell you, dear madam, that you need not take the trouble to burn the Hall down in his honor this time; but only to have the chimney of the blue-room swept before his arrival."

Before I had reached the end of my sentence, I became aware of something ominous in the faces of the guests. I felt I had said something which I had better have left unsaid, and that for some unexplained reason my words had evoked a general consternation. I sat confounded, not daring to utter another syllable, and for at least two whole minutes there was dead silence round the table. Then Captain Prendergast came to the rescue.

"You have been abroad for some months, have you not, Mr. Langford?" he said, with the desperation of one who flings himself into the breach. "I heard you had been to Russia. Surely you have something to tell us of the state and temper of the country after the war?"

I was heartily grateful to the gallant Skirmisher for this diversion in my favor. I answered him, I fear, somewhat lamely; but he kept the conversation up, and presently one or two others joined in, and so the difficulty, whatever it might have been, was bridged over. Bridged over, but not repaired. A something, an awkwardness, a visible constraint remained. The guests hitherto had been simply dull; but now they were evidently uncomfortable and embarrassed.

The dessert had scarcely been placed upon the table when the ladies left the room. I seized the opportunity to select a vacant chair next Captain Prendergast.

"In heaven's name," I whispered, "what was the matter just now? What had I said?"

"You mentioned the name of John Dwerrihouse."

"What of that? I had seen him not two hours before."

"It is a most astounding circumstance that you should have seen him," said Captain Prendergast. "Are you sure it was he?"

"As sure as of my own identity. We were talking all the way between London and Blackwater. But why does that surprise you?"

"Because," replied Captain Prendergast, dropping his voice to the lowest whisper—"because John Dwerrihouse absconded three months ago, with seventy-five thousand pounds of the company's money, and has never been heard of since."

II.

John Dwerrihouse had absconded three months ago—and I had seen him only a few hours back. John Dwerrihouse had embezzled seventy-five thousand pounds of the company's money—yet told me that he carried that sum upon his person. Were ever facts so strangely incongruous, so difficult to reconcile? How should he have ventured again into the light of day? How dared he show himself along the line? Above all, what had he been doing throughout those mysterious three months of disappearance?

Perplexing questions, these. Questions which at once suggested themselves to the minds of all concerned, but which admitted of no easy solution. I could find no reply to them. Captain Prendergast had not even a suggestion to offer. Jonathan Jelf, who seized the first opportunity of drawing me aside and learning all that I had to tell, was more amazed and bewildered than either of us. He came to my room that night, when all the guests were gone, and we talked the thing over from every point of view—without, it must be confessed, arriving at any kind of conclusion.

"I do not ask you," he said, "whether you can have mistaken your man. That is impossible."

"As impossible as that I should mistake some stranger for yourself."

"It is not a question of looks or voice, but of facts. That he should have alluded to the fire in the blue room is proof enough of John Dwerrihouse's identity. How did he look?"

"Older, I thought. Considerably older, paler, and more anxious."

"He has had enough to make him look anxious, anyhow," said my friend gloomily, "be he innocent or guilty."

"I am inclined to believe that he is innocent," I replied. "He showed no embarrassment when I addressed him, and no uneasiness when the guard came round. His conversation was open. to a fault. I might almost say that he talked too freely of the business which he had in hand."

"That again is strange; for I know no one more reticent on such subjects. He actually told you that he had seventy-five thousand pounds in his pocket?"

"He did."

"Humph! My wife has an idea about it. and she may be right——"

"What idea?"

"Well, she fancies—women are so clever, you know, at putting themselves inside people's motives—she fancies that he was tempted; that he did actually take the money; and that he has been concealing himself these three months in some wild part of the country—struggling possibly with his conscience all the time, and daring neither to abscond with his booty, nor to come back and restore it."

"But now that he has come back?"

"That is the point. She conceives that he has probably thrown himself upon the company's mercy; made restitution of the money; and, being forgiven, is permitted to carry the business through as if nothing whatever had happened."

"The last," I replied, "is an impossible case. Mrs. Jelf thinks like a generous and delicate-minded woman; but not in the least like a board of railway directors. They would never carry forgiveness so far."

"I fear not; and yet it is the only conjecture that bears a semblance of likelihood. However, we can run over to Clayborough to-morrow, and see if anything is to be learned. By the way, Prendergast tells me you picked up his cigar-case."

"I did so, and here it is."

Jelf took the cigar-case, examined it by the light of the lamp, and said at once that it was beyond doubt Mr. Dwerrihouse's property, and that he remembered to have seen him use it.

"Here, too, is his monogram on the side," he added. "A big J transfixing a capital D. He used to carry the same on his note-paper."

"It offers, at all events, a proof that I was not dreaming."

"Ay; but it is time you were asleep and dreaming now. I am ashamed to have kept you up so long. Good-night."

"Good-night, and remember that I am more than ready to go with you to Clayborough, or Blackwater, or London, or anywhere, if I can be of the least service."

"Thanks! I know you mean it, old friend, and it may be that I shall put you to the test. Once more, good-night."

So we parted for that night, and met again in the breakfast-room at half-past eight next morning. It was a hurried, silent, uncomfortable meal. None of us had slept well, and all were thinking of the same subject. Mrs. Jelf had evidently been crying; Jelf was impatient to be off; and both Captain Prendergast and myself felt ourselves to be in the painful position of outsiders, who are involuntarily brought into a domestic trouble. Within twenty minutes after we had left the breakfast-table, the dog-cart was brought round, and my friend and I were on the road to Clayborough.

"Tell you what it is, Langford," he said, as we sped along between the wintry hedges, "I do not much fancy to bring up Dwerrihouse's name at Clayborough. All the officials know that he is my wife's

relation, and the subject just now is hardly a pleasant one. If you don't much mind, we will take the 11:10 to Blackwater. It's an important station, and we shall stand a far better chance of picking up information there than at Clayborough."

So we took the 11:10, which happened to be an express, and, arriving at Blackwater about a quarter before twelve, proceeded at once to prosecute our inquiry.

We began by asking for the station-master—a big, blunt, business-like person, who at once averred that he knew Mr. John Dwerrihouse perfectly well, and that there was no director on the line whom he had seen and spoken to so frequently.

"He used to be down here two or three times a week, about three months ago," said he, "when the new line was first set afoot, but since then, you know, gentlemen——"

He paused significantly.

Jelf flushed scarlet.

"Yes, yes," he said, hurriedly, "we know all about that. The point now to be ascertained is whether anything has been seen or heard of him lately."

"Not to my knowledge," replied the station-master.

"He is not known to have been down the line any time yesterday, for instance?"

The station-master shook his head.

"The East Anglian, sir," said he, "is about the last place where he would dare to show himself. Why, there isn't a station-master, there isn't a guard, there isn't a porter, who doesn't know Mr. Dwerrihouse by sight as well as he knows his own face in the looking-glass; or who wouldn't telegraph for the police as soon as he had set eyes on him at any point along the line. Bless you, sir! there's been a standing order out against him ever since the 25th of September last."

"And yet," pursued my friend, "a gentleman who traveled down yesterday from London to Clayborough by the afternoon express testifies that he saw Mr. Dwerrihouse in the train, and that Mr. Dwerrihouse alighted at Blackwater station."

"Quite impossible, sir," replied the station-master, promptly.

"Why impossible?"

"Because there is no station along the line where he is so well known, or where he would run so great a risk. It would be just running his head into the lion's mouth. He would have been mad to come nigh Blackwater station; and if he had come, he would have been arrested before he left the platform."

"Can you tell me who took the Blackwater tickets of that train?"

"I can, sir. It was the guard—Benjamin Somers."

"And where can I find him?"

"You can find him, sir, by staying here, if you please, till one o'clock. He will be coming through with the up-express from Crampton, which stays at Blackwater for ten minutes."

By one o'clock we were back again upon the platform, and waiting for the train. It came punctually, and I at once recognized the ruddy-faced guard who had gone down with my train the evening before.

"The gentlemen want to ask you something about Mr. Dwerrihouse, Somers," said the station-master, by way of introduction.

The guard flashed a keen glance from my face to Jelf's, and back again to mine.

"Mr. John Dwerrihouse, the late director?" said he, interrogatively.

"The same," replied my friend. "Should you know him if you saw him?"

"Anywhere, sir."

"Do know if he was in the 4:15 express yesterday afternoon?"

"He was not, sir."

"How can you answer so positively?"

"Because I looked into every carriage, and saw every face in the train, and I could take my oath that Mr. Dwerrihouse was not in it. This gentleman was," he added, turning sharply upon me. "I don't know that I ever saw him before in my life, but I remember his face perfectly. You nearly missed taking your seat in time at this station, sir, and you got out at Clayborough."

"Quite true, guard," I replied; "but do you not also remember the face of the gentleman who traveled down in the same carriage with me as far as here?"

"It was my impression, sir, that you traveled down alone," said Somers, with a look of some surprise.

"By no means. I had a fellow-traveler as far as Blackwater, and it was in trying to restore him the cigar-case which he had dropped in the carriage, that I so nearly let you go on without me."

"I remember your saying something about a cigar-case, certainly," replied the guard; "but——"

"You asked for my ticket just before we entered the station."

"I did, sir."

"Then you must have seen him. He sat in the corner next the very door to which you came."

"No, indeed. I saw no one."

I looked at Jelf. I began to think the guard was in the ex-director's confidence.

"If I had seen another traveler, I should have asked for his ticket," added Somers. "Did you see me ask for his ticket, sir?"

"I observed that you did not ask for it, but he explained that by saying——" I hesitated. I feared I might be telling too much, and so broke off abruptly. The guard and the station-master exchanged glances. The former looked impatiently at his watch.

"I am obliged to go on in four minutes more, sir," he said.

"One last question, then," interposed Jelf, with a sort of desperation. "If this gentleman's fellow-traveler had been Mr. John Dwerrihouse, and he had been sitting in the corner next the door by which you took the tickets, could you have failed to see and recognize him?"

"No, sir; it would have been quite impossible."

"And you are certain you did not see him?"

"As I said before, sir, I could take my oath I did not see him. And if it wasn't that I don't like to contradict a gentleman, I would say I could also take my oath that this gentleman was quite alone in the carriage the whole way from London to Clayborough. Why, sir," he added, dropping his voice so as to be inaudible to the station-master, "you expressly asked me to give you a compartment to yourself, and I did so. I locked you in, and you were so good as to give me something for myself."

"Yes; but Mr. Dwerrihouse had a key of his own."

"I never saw him, sir; I saw no one in that compartment but yourself. Beg pardon, sir, my time's up."

And with this the ruddy guard touched his cap and was gone. In another minute the heavy panting of the engine began afresh, and the train glided slowly out of the station.

We looked at each other for some moments in silence. I was the first to speak.

"Mr. Benjamin Somers knows more than he chooses to tell," I said.

"Humph! do you think so?"

"It must be. He could not have come to the door without seeing him. It's impossible."

"There is one thing not impossible, my dear fellow."

"What is that?"

"That you may have fallen asleep, and dreamt the whole thing."

"Could I dream of a branch line that I had never heard of? Could I dream of a hundred and one business details that had no kind of interest for me? Could I dream of the seventy-five thousand pounds?"

"Perhaps you might have seen or heard some vague account of the affair while you were abroad. It might have made no impression upon you at the time, and might have come back to you in your dreams—recalled perhaps by the mere names of the stations on the line."

"What about the fire in the chimney of the blue-room—should I have heard of that during my journey?"

"Well, no; I admit there is a difficulty about that point."

"And what about the cigar-case?"

"Ay, by Jove! there is the cigar-case. That is a stubborn fact. Well it's a mysterious affair, and it will need a better detective than myself, I fancy, to clear it up. I suppose we may as well go home."

III.

A week had not gone by when I received a letter from the secretary of the East Anglian Railway Company, requesting the favor of my attendance at a special board meeting, then not many days distant. No reasons were alleged, and no apologies offered, for this demand upon my time; but they had heard, it was clear, of my inquiries about the missing director, and had a mind to put me through some sort of official

examination upon the subject. Being still a guest at Dumbleton Hall, I had to go up to London for the purpose, and Jonathan Jelf accompanied me. I found the direction of the Great East Anglian line represented by a party of some twelve or fourteen gentlemen seated in solemn conclave round a huge green-baized table, in a gloomy board-room, adjoining the London terminus.

Being courteously received by the chairman (who at once began by saying that certain statements of mine respecting Mr. John Dwerrihouse had come to the knowledge of the direction, and that they in consequence desired to confer with me on those points), we were placed at the table and the inquiry proceeded in due form.

I was first asked if I knew Mr. John Dwerrihouse, how long I had been acquainted with him, and whether I could identify him at sight. I was then asked when I had seen him last. To which I replied: "On the fourth of this present month, December, 1856." Then came the inquiry of where I had seen him on that fourth day of December; to which I replied that I met him in a first-class compartment of the 4:15 down-express; that he got in just as the train was leaving the London terminus, and that he alighted at Blackwater station. The chairman then inquired whether I had held any communication with my fellow-traveler; whereupon I related, as nearly as I could remember it, the whole bulk and substance of Mr. John Dwerrihouse's diffuse information respecting the new branch line.

To all this the board listened with profound attention, while the chairman presided and the secretary took notes. I then produced the cigar-case. It was passed from hand to hand and recognized by all. There was not a man present who did not remember that plain

cigar-case with its silver monogram, or to whom it seemed anything less than entirely corroborative of my evidence. When at length I had told all that I had to tell, the chairman whispered something to the secretary; the secretary touched a silver hand-bell; and the guard, Benjamin Somers, was ushered into the room. He was then examined as carefully as myself. He declared that he knew Mr. John Dwerrihouse perfectly well; that he could not be mistaken in him; that he remembered going down with the 4:15 express on the afternoon in question; that he remembered me; and that, there being one or two empty first-class compartments on that especial afternoon, he had, in compliance with my request, placed me in a carriage by myself. He was positive that I remained alone in that compartment all the way from London to Clayborough. He was ready to take his oath that Mr. Dwerrihouse was neither in that carriage with me nor in any compartment of that train. He remembered distinctly to have examined my ticket at Blackwater; was certain that there was no one else at that time in the carriage; could not have failed to observe any second person, had there been one; had that second person been Mr. John Dwerrihouse, should have quietly double-locked the door of the carriage, and have at once given information to the Blackwater station-master. So clear, so decisive, so ready, was Somers with this testimony, that the board looked fairly puzzled.

"You hear this person's statement, Mr. Langford," said the chairman. "It contradicts yours in every particular. What have you to say in reply?"

"I can only repeat what I said before. I am quite as positive of the truth of my own assertions as Mr. Somers can be of the truth of his."

"You say that Mr. Dwerrihouse alighted at Blackwater, and that he was in possession of a private key.

Are you sure he had not alighted by means of that key before the guard came round for the tickets?"

"I am quite positive that he did not leave the carriage till the train had fairly entered the station, and the other Blackwater passengers alighted. I even saw that he was met there by a friend."

"Indeed! Did you see that person distinctly?"

"Quite distinctly."

"Can you describe his appearance?"

"I think so. He was short and very slight, sandy-haired, with a bushy mustache and beard, and he wore a closely-fitting suit of gray tweed. His age I should take to be about thirty-eight or forty."

"Did Mr. Dwerrihouse leave the station in this person's company?"

"I cannot tell. I saw them walking together down the platform, and then I saw them standing aside under a gas-jet, talking earnestly. After that I lost sight of them quite suddenly; and just then my train went on, and I with it."

The chairman and secretary conferred together in an undertone. The directors whispered to each other. One or two looked suspiciously at the guard. I could see that my evidence remained unshaken, and that, like myself, they suspected some complicity between the guard and the defaulter.

"How far did you conduct that 4.15 express on the day in question, Somers?" asked the chairman.

"All through, sir," replied the guard; "from London to Crampton."

"How was it that you were not relieved at Clayborough? I thought there was always a change of guards at Clayborough."

"There used to be, sir, till the new regulations came in force last midsummer; since when, the guards in charge of express trains go the whole way through."

The chairman turned to the secretary.

"I think it would be as well," he said, "if we had the day-book to refer to upon this point."

Again the secretary touched the silver hand-bell, and desired the porter in attendance to summon Mr. Raikes. From a word or two dropped by another of the directors, I gathered that Mr. Raikes was one of the under-secretaries.

He came—a small, slight, sandy-haired, keen-eyed man, with an eager, nervous manner, and a forest of light beard and mustache. He just showed himself at the door of the board-room, and being requested to bring a certain day-book from a certain shelf in a certain room, bowed and vanished.

He was there such a moment, and the surprise of seeing him was so great and sudden, that it was not till the door had closed upon him that I found voice to speak. He was no sooner gone, however, than I sprang to my feet.

"That person," I said, "is the same who met Mr. Dwerrihouse upon the platform at Blackwater!"

There was a general movement of surprise. The chairman looked grave and somewhat agitated.

"Take care, Mr. Langford," he said; "take care what you say!"

"I am as positive of his identity as of my own."

"Do you consider the consequences of your words? Do you consider that you are bringing a charge of the gravest character against one of the company's servants?"

"I am willing to be put on my oath, if necessary. The man who came to that door a minute since, is the same whom I saw talking with Mr. Dwerrihouse on the Blackwater platform. Were he twenty times the company's servant, I could say neither more nor less."

The chairman turned again to the guard.

"Did you see Mr. Raikes in the train, or on the platform?" he asked.

Somers shook his head. "I am confident Mr. Raikes was not in the train," he said; "and I certainly did not see him on the platform."

The chairman turned next to the secretary.

"Mr. Raikes is in your office, Mr. Hunter," he said. "Can you remember if he was absent on the fourth instant?"

"I do not think he was," replied the secretary; "but I am not prepared to speak positively. I have been away most afternoons myself lately, and Mr. Raikes might easily have absented himself if he had been disposed." At this moment the under-secretary returned with the day-book under his arm.

"Be pleased to refer, Mr. Raikes," said the chairman, "to the entries of the fourth instant, and see what Benjamin Somer's duties were on that day."

Mr. Raikes threw open the cumbrous volume, and ran a practised eye and finger down some three or four successive columns of entries. Stopping suddenly at the foot of a page, he then read aloud that Benjamin Somers had on that day conducted the 4.15 express from London to Crampton.

The chairman leaned forward in his seat, looked the under-secretary full in the face, and said, quite sharply and suddenly:

"Where were you, Mr. Raikes, on the same afternoon?"

"I, sir?"

"You, Mr. Raikes. Where were you on the afternoon and evening of the fourth of the present month?"

"Here, sir—in Mr. Hunter's office. Where else should I be?" There was a dash of trepidation in the

under-secretary's voice as he said this; but his look of surprise was natural enough.

"We have some reason for believing, Mr. Raikes, that you were absent that afternoon without leave. Was this the case?"

"Certainly not, sir. I have not had a day's holiday since September. Mr. Hunter will bear me out in this."

Mr. Hunter repeated what he had previously said on the subject, but added that the clerks in the adjoining office would be certain to know. Whereupon the senior clerk, a grave, middle-aged person, in green glasses, was summoned and interrogated.

His testimony cleared the under-secretary at once. He declared that Mr. Raikes had in no instance, to his knowledge, been absent during office hours since his return from his holiday in September.

I was confounded. The chairman turned to me with a smile, in which a shade of covert annoyance was scarcely apparent.

"You hear, Mr. Langford?" he said.

"I hear, sir; but my conviction remains unshaken."

"I fear, Mr. Langford, that your convictions are very insufficiently based," replied the chairman with a doubtful cough. "I fear that you 'dream dreams,' and mistake them for actual occurrences. It is a dangerous habit of mind, and might lead to dangerous results. Mr. Raikes here would have found himself in an unpleasant position, had he not proved so satisfactorily an alibi."

I was about to reply, but he gave me no time.

"I think, gentlemen," he went on to say, addressing the board, "that we should be wasting time to push this inquiry further. Mr. Langford's evidence would seem to be of an equal value throughout. The testimony of Benjamin Somers disproves his first statement,

and the testimony of the last witness disproves his second. I think we may conclude that Mr. Langford fell asleep in the train on the occasion of his journey to Clayborough, and dreamt an unusually vivid and circumstantial dream—of which, however, we have now heard quite enough."

There are few things more annoying than to find one's positive convictions met with incredulity. I could not help feeling impatience at the turn that affairs had taken. I was not proof against the civil sarcasm of the chairman's manner.. Most intolerable of all, however, was the quiet smile lurking about the corners of Benjamin Somer's mouth, and the half-triumphant, half-malicious gleam in the eyes of the under-secretary. The man was evidently puzzled, and somewhat alarmed. His looks seemed furtively to interrogate me. Who was I? What did I want? Why had I come there to do him an ill turn with his employers? What was it to me whether or no he was absent without leave?

Seeing all this, and perhaps more irritated by it than the thing deserved, I begged leave to detain the attention of the board for a moment longer. Jelf plucked me impatiently by the sleeve.

"Better let the thing drop," he whispered. "The chairman's right enough. You dreamt it; and the less said now, the better."

I was not to be silenced, however, in this fashion. I had yet something to say, and I would say it. It was to this effect: That dreams were not usually productive of tangible results, and that I requested to know in what way the chairman conceived I had evolved from my dream so substantial and well-made a delusion as the cigar-case which I had had the honor to place before him at the commencement of our interview.

"The cigar-case, I admit, Mr. Langford," the chairman replied, "is a very strong point in your evidence. It is your only strong point, however, and there is just a possibility that we may all be misled by a mere accidental resemblance. Will you permit me to see the case again?"

"It is unlikely," I said, as I handed it to him, "that any other should bear precisely this monogram, and yet be in all other particulars exactly similar." The chairman examined it for a moment in silence, and then passed it to Mr. Hunter. Mr. Hunter turned it over and over, and shook his head.

"This is no mere resemblance," he said. "It is John Dwerrihouse's cigar-case to a certainty. I remember it perfectly. I have seen it a hundred times."

"I believe I may say the same," added the chairman. "Yet how account for the way in which Mr. Langford asserts that it came into his possession?"

"I can only repeat," I replied, "that I found it on the floor of the cariage after Mr. Dwerrihouse had alighted. It was in leaning out to look after him that I trod upon it; and it was in running after him for the purpose of restoring it that I saw—or believed I saw—Mr. Raikes standing aside with him in earnest conversation."

Again I felt Jonathan Jelf plucking at my sleeve.

"Look at Raikes," he whispered. "Look at Raikes!" I turned where the under-secretary had been standing a moment before, and saw him, white as death, with Jelf, "it means that murder has been done."

To conceive a sudden, strange, and indefinite suspicion; to fling myself in his way; to take him by the shoulders as if he were a child, and turn his craven face perforce toward the board, were with me the work of an instant.

"Look at him!" I exclaimed. "Look at his face! I ask no better witness to the truth of my words."

The chairman's brow darkened.

"Mr. Raikes," he said sternly, "if you know anything, you had better speak."

Vainly trying to wrench himself from my grasp, the under-secretary stammered out an incoherent denial.

"Let me go," he said. "I know nothing—you have no right to detain me—let me go!"

"Did you, or did you not, meet Mr. John Dwerrihouse at Blackwater station? The charge brought against you is either true or false. If true, you will do well to throw yourself upon the mercy of the board, and make a full confession of all that you know." The under-secretary wrung his hands in an agony of helpless terror.

"I was away," he cried. "I was two hundred miles away at the time! I know nothing about it, I have nothing to confess, I am innocent, I call God to witness I am innocent!"

"Two hundred miles away!" echoed the chairman. "What do you mean?"

"I was in Devonshire. I had three weeks' leave of absence—I appeal to Mr. Hunter—Mr. Hunter knows I had three weeks' leave of absence! I was in Devonshire all the time, I can prove I was in Devonshire!"

Seeing him so abject, so incoherent, so wild with apprehension, the directors began to whisper gravely among themselves; while one got quietly up, and called the porter to guard the door.

"What has your being in Devonshire to do with the matter? When were you in Devonshire?"

"Mr. Raikes took his leave in September," said the secretary; "about the time when Mr. Dwerrihouse disappeared."

"I never even heard that he had disappeared till I came back!"

"That must remain to be proved," said the chairman. "I shall at once put this matter in the hands of the police. In the meanwhile, Mr. Raikes, being myself a magistrate, and used to deal with these cases, I advise you to confess while confession may yet do you service. As for your accomplice——"

The frightened wretch fell upon his knees.

"I had no accomplice!" he cried. "Only have mercy upon me—only spare my life, and I will confess all! I didn't mean to harm him! I didn't mean to hurt a hair of his head. Only have mercy upon me, and let me go!"

The chairman rose in his place, pale and agitated. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "what horrible mystery is this? What does it mean?"

"As sure as there is a God in heaven," said Jonathan Jelf, "it means that murder has been done."

"No—no—no!" shrieked Raikes, still upon his knees, and cowering like a beaten hound. "Not murder! No jury that ever sat could bring it in murder. I thought I had only stunned him—I never meant to do more than stun him! Manslaughter—manslaughter—not murder!"

Overcome by the horror of this unexpected revelation, the chairman covered his face with his hand, and for a moment or two remained silent.

"Miserable man," he said at length, "you have betrayed yourself."

"You bade me confess! You urged me to throw myself upon the mercy of the board!"

"You have confessed to a crime which no one suspected you of having committed," replied the chairman, "and which this board has no power either to punish or forgive. All that I can do for you is to

advise you to submit to the law, to plead guilty, and to conceal nothing. When did you do this deed?"

The guilty man rose to his feet, and leaned heavily against the table. His answer came reluctantly, like the speech of one dreaming.

"On the twenty-second of September."

On the twenty-second of September! I looked in Jonathan Jelf's face, and he in mine. I felt my own paling with a strange sense of wonder and dread. I saw his blench suddenly, even to the lips.

"Merciful heaven!" he whispered, "what was it, then, that you saw in the train?"

* * * *

What was it that I saw in the train? That question remains unanswered to this day. I have never been able to reply to it. I only know that it bore the living likeness of the murdered man, whose body had then been lying some ten weeks under a rough pile of branches, and brambles, and rotting leaves, at the bottom of a deserted chalk-pit about half way between Blackwater and Mallingford. I know that it spoke, and moved, and looked as that man spoke, and moved, and looked in life; that I heard, or seemed to hear, things related which I could never otherwise have learned; that I was guided, as it were, by that vision on the platform to the identification of the murderer; and that, a passive instrument myself, I was destined, by means of these mysterious teachings, to bring about the ends of justice. For these things I have never been able to account.

As for the matter of the cigar-case, it proved, on inquiry, that the carriage in which I traveled down that afternoon to Clayborough had not been in use for several weeks, and was, in point of fact, the same in which poor John Dwerrihouse had performed his last

journey. The case had, doubtless, been dropped by him, and had lain unnoticed till I found it.

Upon the details of the murder I have no need to dwell. Those who desire more ample particulars may find them, and the written confession of Augustus Raikes, in the files of the "Times" for 1856. Enough that the under-secretary, knowing the history of the new line, and following the negotiation step by step through all its stages, determined to waylay Mr. Dwerrihouse, rob him of the seventy-five thousand pounds, and escape to America with his booty.

In order to effect these ends he obtained leave of absence a few days before the time appointed for the payment of the money; secured his passage across the Atlantic in a steamer advertised to start on the twenty-third; provided himself with a heavily loaded "life preserver," and went down to Blackwater to await the arrival of his victim. How he met him on the platform with a pretended message from the board; how he offered to conduct him by a short cut across the fields to Mallingford; how, having brought him to a lonely place, he struck him down with the "life preserver," and so killed him; and how, finding what he had done, he dragged the body to the verge of an out-of-the-way chalk-pit, and there flung it in, and piled it over with branches and brambles, are facts still fresh in the memories of those who, like the connoisseurs in De Quincey's famous essay, regard murder as a fine art. Strangely enough, the murderer, having done his work, was afraid to leave the country. He declared that he had not intended to take the director's life, but only to stun and rob him; and that, finding the blow had killed, he dared not fly for fear of drawing down suspicion upon his own head. As a mere robber he would have been safe in the States, but as a murderer he would inevitably have been pursued and given up

to justice. So he forfeited his passage, returned to the office as usual at the end of his leave, and locked up his ill-gotten thousands till a more convenient opportunity. In the meanwhile he had the satisfaction of finding that Mr. Dwerrihouse was universally believed to have absconded with the money, no one knew how or whither.

Whether he meant murder or not, however, Mr. Augustus Raikes paid the full penalty of his crime, and was hanged at the Old Bailey in the second week in January, 1857.

THE END